RELIGION AS SALVATION

HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL

Religion as Salvation

ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS
New York • Nashville

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 53-5400

SET UP, PRINTED, AND BOUND BY THE
PARTHENON PRESS, AT NASHVILLE,
TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

A PREFACE IS THE AUTHOR'S OPPORTUNITY FOR A PERSONAL WORD WITH HIS READERS. IT IS USED HERE TO STATE THE theme and purpose of this discussion and to indicate my point of view. What is here briefly affirmed must find its explanation and justification in the body of the work.

Christianity is a dynamic religion, a religion of life and power. Its God is not abstract idea or impersonal order or some kind of spiritual substance; he is the living God, the God of gracious purpose and action. The Christian Church is not a legally established institution, with fixed and unchanging forms; it is a living fellowship, the human-historical expression of a divinely given life. The Christian ethic is not a static set of rules or abstract principles; it is a way of life after the spirit of Christ.

To these three aspects of the Christian religion—the faith, the fellowship, and the way of living—I add the fourth, religion as salvation. Here is its living center, the clearest expression of its dynamic nature. We see in the salvation of man the purpose and work of the living God. The Scriptures are the record of this redemptive action, whose central deed and supreme expression are seen in Christ. The Church is the company of "those who are being saved," at once the fruit and the instrument of this ongoing divine work.

The idea of religion as salvation has not had much place in the modern world. God and man's need are the pillars on which this doctrine rests. The modern age has had little place for a God who made a real difference in the world's life, even when it continued to name his name. The forces of nature were very real, as was the science by which man comprehended them and was able to use

them. There were evils to be overcome and larger goods to be attained, but these were in the material sphere and man with his knowledge and skills was quite equal to this. The new democracy was man's opportunity in the social field. So there was the common conclusion, though not often consciously expressed, that "salvation belonged to an extinct ideology."

There has been a measure of neglect within the Church as well. This has been due to various causes. The Church was increasingly concerned with practical problems too long neglected: organized work dealing with human needs and in particular with the relation of religion to modern social conditions. Further, the traditional forms in which salvation had been presented lost some of their hold upon men. And theologians, discussing problems of biblical criticism, the relation of science and religion, evolution and creation, and grounds for belief in God, gave too little place or serious consideration to this central theme.

We are witnessing, however, a definite change in this situation. The social optimism of yesterday has been ebbing fast. Science is no longer the new messiah; the technology which increased our power and multiplied our comforts now appears as a weapon threatening world destruction. We have seen appalling manifestations of the depths of evil in man. There has been widespread increase of the mood of anxiety, frustration, and fear. Men are turning to psychiatrists and to books which promise them peace of mind. Our mental hospitals doubled the number of inmates within a score of years. In large world areas there is possible or actual revolution caused by want and by a growing desire for freedom. There is exploitation by selfish and self-appointed saviors. This has brought constant warfare and two world wars with the threat of an incomparably more terrible third. As perhaps never before, mankind is aware of the power of evil and the need of help.

So we have the supreme challenge to the Church of today: Have we an answer to these deep individual and social needs? The Church is waking up to this challenge. The trend of the co-operative church movements of the last century and a half is significant.

They began with a concern for the practical work of the Church and a realization of the need of united action for its accomplishment. So there appeared Bible and tract societies, societies for home and foreign missions, the Sunday-School Union, the Christian Associations, and student movements. The formal ecumenical movement began with "Faith and Order," facing the need of a united Church, studying the causes of division and the elements of unity. The "Life and Work" movement considered the meaning of the Christian faith for the wide range of social problems. Now in the World Council of Churches we see the growing awareness of the problem of religion as salvation. The Amsterdam Assembly issued its volume of official reports under the title *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, and the proposed theme for the 1954 assembly is the Christian message of hope, or Christ as the hope of the world.

All this enforces the need of a renewed study of our doctrine of salvation. In this we are simply carrying on what the Church has done from the beginning. Christianity is a fact and a faith: a fact of history and human experience, a faith which has discerned in these the saving work of the God of righteousness and mercy. But a third element has been equally essential: the task of interpretation, the need to set forth the meaning of this faith and its relation to man's life. So the first disciples sought to interpret the fact of Christ, the new experience of a saving power in their lives, and the meaning of the new fellowship. Paul, the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine writings, Hebrews, and Revelation are all concerned with this work of interpretation. We hold the same faith and share the same task. We build on their work and that of the saints and scholars who followed them, but we in turn, guided by the Spirit, with faith in the living God who is still working in our world, must set forth the meaning of the eternal gospel for our day.

In this work of interpreting and declaring the message of salvation certain tasks are clear. We must make plain that it is salvation with which we are dealing: life as a gift, the love and power of God coming to meet the needs of man. We must see the full scope of this salvation, with special reference to such neglected areas as the social-historical on the one hand and on the other the ways in

which God works to mediate life and help, to solve man's personal and inner problems. Further, we need to see God's salvation in its organic unity and wholeness, noting how each aspect is rightly understood only in union with others: individual and social, present and historical, religious and ethical, this world and the life to come. Finally, we need to see this work of God in its relation to vital human needs and to the special situation of our day.

My general position can be briefly stated. It is evangelical; it sees as central in Christianity the gospel of a God of mercy and help, coming to man in Jesus Christ. It is biblical, though not biblicistic or literalistic. It sees the Bible as the witness to God's saving work in Israel, in Christ, in the Church, and as the interpretation of that work by prophet and apostle. In the broad sense of the term this is intended as a churchly theology. It does not see the Church as a legally established institution, authoritarian, infallible, administering a priestly-sacramentarian salvation; but it sees Christianity as the religion of a fellowship, the Church as at once instrument and realization of God's work of salvation.

There is recognized here the right and need of man's work of study, reflection, insight, criticism, and the bringing of truth into an ordered and unified whole. There is a "given" in the reality of God's revelation in Christ, but not in a set of formulated doctrines handed down in Scripture or the creeds of the Church. There is a guidance which God waits to give by his Spirit, but it is not mechanical or compulsive, and there remains the human factor with its limitations. Our God is one who speaks to us as Person to person, speaks to mind as well as heart and will. It is ours to answer with understanding as well as with the obedience of faith.

The words that follow are written with the prayer that what is of truth may win its way, that what is imperfect or of error may be overruled.

HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL

CONTENTS

PART ONE

MAN

PART TWO

SIN

PART THREE

SALVATION

PART ONE

MAN

MAN'S HOPE OF SALVATION RESTS UPON HIS FAITH IN GOD, BUT THE CONCEPT OF MAN IS NEXT IN IMPORTANCE FOR a study of the Christian doctrine of salvation. Salvation is at once deliverance from evil and help in the attainment of good. For both of these the doctrine of man is vital.

The greatest problem for man is man. There are evils enough in the world about us, but the root of evil lies in man himself. Christian salvation deals with man as a sinner. It faces realistically the problem as to what is the matter with man. A right doctrine of man is equally important when we consider the positive side of salvation, the attainment of good. Man as a problem is one side of this matter; man in his capacity for redemption is the other. It is not a question of man's powers and virtues to be set side by side with the power and goodness of God. Man's capacity to receive is from God just as salvation itself is God's gift. What is there in man that makes it possible for him to receive this life from God which we call salvation?

In its doctrine of man the Christian gospel has a vital contribution to make to the thought of all who are concerned with social welfare. More and more men are recognizing that the final problem in every field is man himself—his insights, his spirit, his attitude. Knowledge is important, but it may go hand in hand with folly. Science may be a great servant of human welfare, but the instruments with which it furnishes man may be turned equally to destruction. We need material goods, but these may become objects of greed, occasions for war, as well as means for selfish indulgence. We need organizations and institutions, social, industrial, and political; but these cannot rise higher than those who compose them,

and too often they become the occasion for strife or tools for the selfish aims of a group. No social problem is solved unless we deal with men. That is true not merely when we face such outstanding evils as war, economic strife, and the linkage of vice and crime and political corruption. It is equally true of constructive efforts to make the state a true minister of welfare and instrument of freedom, and to secure a world organization which will make for co-operation and peace.

Of special interest is the attention being given today to the factor of human nature by those who work in the many and expanding fields of personalized service. Not merely the psychiatrist but social welfare workers, educators, physicians, police, judiciary, administrators of corrective and penal institutions—all are coming more and more to recognize that they must first understand man if they would deal with man and serve him.

If Christianity has a message of salvation from God, then it should have a word of light and guidance for all these fields as it sets forth what man is, what is the matter with man, and what it is possible for man to become. These are the matters to be considered before we take up the doctrine of salvation proper. I will discuss them under the two heads "Man" and "Sin"—what man is and what is the matter with man.

CHAPTER ONE

CURRENT CONCEPTIONS OF MAN

WIDELY VARYING CONCEPTIONS OF MAN OBTAIN TODAY, SOME OF THEM IN RADICAL OPPOSITION TO THE Christian view. Sometimes these conceptions are implicit rather than avowed, especially in the case of social political theories.

Materialism sees man as a creature of earth, and only that. As a last-century German philosopher put it, you are what you eat—*Man ist was er isst.* The average man, it is estimated, has in his body the equivalent of some ten gallons of water, twenty-four pounds of coal, seven pounds of lime, not quite two pounds of phosphorus, with some sugar, salt, iodine, sulphur, potassium, and other elements. The materialism which sees man as merely the compound of these elements is rare today.

At the opposite extreme is the rationalist-idealist view which stems from Plato. Reason is man's essential nature; the rest is incidental. True, his spirit is enclosed in a body, which one may call the prison of the soul. And the body has its passions which must be ruled by the spirit. But all these have no real place in the true life of a man, which is that of reason. Akin to this is the romanticist view. It sees man as basically good. What he needs is simply freedom—freedom from hampering social conventions, from superstitious ideas and the whole artificial structure of "civilization." With this we may contrast the cynical-pessimistic view, for which man's chief mark is not reason but folly. True, he has knowledge and skills and power, but the further he advances in these the more serious is his predicament. He is ruled by the ancient in-

stincts of the jungle, the fighting instinct first of all; and in a world which demands co-operation he is incurably selfish.

Biology, psychology, and sociology are sciences which have contributed directly to our knowledge of human nature. No one of them yields by itself an adequate doctrine of man, but they have all been appealed to in support of special theories.

There is first what may be called the idea of the "biological man." The theory of evolution is determinative here, and the biological origin of man is assumed to yield an adequate account of his nature. Man as an animal is akin to his lesser brethren. His structure, bone by bone, organ by organ, shows him to be one of the higher vertebrates. Further, he has the same basic instincts and appetites—hunger, sex, fear, the herd instinct. In times of crisis, alike with the individual and the group, these, and not the acquired social customs and conventions which we call civilization, are the determining forces. There are, of course, differences, structural and psychological. With only two legs to stand on he is not so secure as the four-legged creatures, and many of these are stronger and swifter than he. But his different profile, with the high forehead, indicates mental development. He can think and talk and plan. His erect posture means that he can look forward and upward and not merely down, and it sets his fore limbs free to use the tools which his cleverness has shaped.

The "psychological man" of the new psychology is akin to this biological man. The Freudian approach is analytical, not genetical; but there is the same emphasis on the primacy of the instinct-impulse side: the will to live, the age-long struggle for existence, the assertion of self in conflict with his fellows and his environment, the sexual drive, the fear lurking at the door, and all this leading to the conflicts within himself.

Each of these theories has its factual basis and its element of truth. Reason is a distinctive mark of man. There is in man a desire for good, a vision of good, and a capacity to respond. There is evil in man: he is his own worst foe, and despair is a not illogical conclusion for those whose world contains nothing higher than

nature and man. Man is a creature of earth; "God formed man of dust from the ground" (Gen. 2:7). Man has come by a long and slow ascent from lower levels of life; he is akin to the lesser creatures not only in body but in the drives that move him to action and influence his thought. The Christian doctrine of man must include these aspects of his nature. Religion deals, and must deal, with the whole man.

But that is where these doctrines are at fault. They take a fragment and view it as the whole. And isolation and overemphasis mean distortion. He who sees only a part fails to understand even the part which he sees. More serious is the second error: the failure to see the highest. Man's world includes God. Man's nature includes the capacity to envisage the moral and spiritual and the ability to respond to it. This is what marks him off from other creatures and indicates his distinctive nature.

Of great importance for our study are the varying conceptions of man which are implied in the competing social ideologies of our day. For the most part they are implied rather than formulated, but they are none the less important, and they underlie those issues which are the source of conflict within nations and between nations. Fascism (including Nazism), communism, capitalism, and democracy may be taken as representative.

The social approach to the doctrine of man belongs naturally to a day like ours in which the group life has become ever more important and the individual has tended to lose significance. The important relations have been economic and political. The former has tended to make of man a cog in the industrial machine; the latter has led to the growth of the state in function and power and so in its control of individual life. The need for a larger measure of social and political control is obvious. We are dealing here only with the more extreme developments as seen in fascism and (Russian) communism, and with the concept of man that has gone with these. It is by these widespread movements, rather than by philosophical theories, that the Christian conception of man is most seriously threatened.

Fascism is the extreme form of statism, and Nazism is the extreme

expression of fascism. The Nazi emphasis on race and land (*Blut und Boden*) was primarily a propaganda affair. The crucial matter in fascism is the idea of the state: nationalist, absolutist, and totalitarian. The state, with its power and glory, is the supreme interest. There is no authority above it, whether of right or of God. Man is here for the state, not the state for man. The mass man is an inferior creature. He is incapable of intelligent and responsible decision and action. Democracy is a delusion. We must have the rule of the superman, of the leader (*Führer, Duce*) and his associates. The common man is here to obey, to work, to fight. The woman is here to bear children for factory and army. Here human personality loses its sacredness and moral personality its meaning; man becomes property and tool. The doctrine has by no means passed with the overthrow of Mussolini and Hitler.

In theory communism stands in favorable contrast to the fascist attitude toward man. It repudiates distinctions of race and class. Its avowed concern is not for the state but for men. It seeks a common economic welfare and security. In its actual development in Russia, however, communism has more and more paralleled fascism. Its increasing concern has been the state, the Russian State. It represents the strictest and most powerful autocracy on the globe. Power is vested in the few and is absolute. The state is totalitarian in its rule: education, the press, science, music and the theater, as well as the industrial and political, are included in its rule. Its concept of man is purely naturalistic. It does not exclude the arts, but its ideology, like its practice, has no place for man as a moral being recognizing moral values and authority, as a religious being whose God is above all human power and authority, or as a being sacred in his own right and entitled to freedom in thought and speech and worship.

Western capitalism, too, is primarily concerned with economic man. Man is first of all a creature who produces and consumes and enjoys. The immediate concern is material well-being. Other goods are contingent upon attaining this. The appeal is to self-interest working in strict competition. The dominant conception of man

and man's life is individualistic and secularistic, not social or religious or ethical.[1]

Democracy is still in the making, alike in the apprehension of its basic ideas as in their realization. More and more it is seen today, not simply as a form of political organization, but as a philosophy of the social life. As such it is inclusive, but not in the sense of any totalitarian control. The conception of man is basic for its thinking. Human personality is sacred and therefore is the supreme concern of society. Hence freedom of spirit, freedom of thought and speech and worship, is not less vital than political freedom. But man is also a morally responsible being, and obligations are inseparable from rights. The good of the social whole conditions the claims of the individual and demands his loyalty and service. Above the individual, as above the state, there is the authority of what is right and just and good. It is this moral quality of man's nature, joined with intelligence, which makes possible a government by the people and the conviction that individual freedom and social justice can be realized together. Thus democracy, as against cynicism and pessimism, involves faith in man. That does not mean romanticism, however; it does not idealize man. Democracy is a slow achievement, involving a constant struggle against ignorance, selfishness, and inertia. But there remains the faith in man as one who is educable, can respond to right ideals, is made for social relations, and can work with others. Clearly this conception of man and of the democratic way shows the influence of prophetic religion.

This is the world in which Christianity must proclaim its message. We tend to think of the competing faiths of this world, as of its want of faith, in terms of the doctrine of God. That is central, but such a survey as the preceding shows how significant the doctrine of man is in the conflicting ideologies of today, and how vital it is to bring the Christian conception as a challenge to the movements which threaten human welfare, as well as to give direction and inspiration to the democratic movement.

[1] The issue here is not that of private enterprise and free competition as against public ownership and control. The reference under "capitalism" is to a widely held philosophy of life, usually assumed rather than consciously chosen.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF MAN

SCIENCE AND RELIGION ARE ALIKE CONCERNED WITH THE ORIGIN OF MAN THOUGH THEIR PROBLEM IS NOT THE SAME. Modern science sees man, with all other animals, as the fruit of a long process of biological evolution stemming from one or a few primary forms of life. The theory, of course, cannot be demonstrated, and opinions differ as to the causes operative in this development. The grounds for its almost universal acceptance are twofold. The first is really more rational, or philosophical, than scientific. Science believes in order, an order extending back in time just as it obtains in space. True, there is the fact of change, often inexplicable, and there is increasing recognition of the element of contigency ("chance," "fortuitous variation"). Yet there remains that basic order of events, or of the operation of forces, which makes possible the generalizations of science (natural laws) and man's control of nature for his ends. There is change, but there is continuity too. Nothing that appears comes *de novo; ex nihilo nihil fit.* That which is, is related to what went before. Second, this theory like all scientific hypotheses is an effort at interpretation, seeking to give unity and meaning to a mass of facts presented by the record of past life and its heritage as found in the present.

What bearing does this theory have upon religious faith? Certainly it does not reduce man to the level of the brute. Newness is just as essential for a theory of evolution as is continuity, and continuity does not mean identity. Not the road by which man came is decisive but the point at which he has arrived. The case of

the individual, in fact, is much like that of the race. The germ from which the individual man develops is without one trace of what we know as the distinctive human qualities, but the man that comes from it is no less truly man. Our age is genetically and historically minded. It assumes that it has accounted for something (man, religion, ethics, the idea of God) when it has traced its development. This common error, which we may call evolutionism or historicism, does not discredit the facts of evolution or history, but it misinterprets them. It confuses *ratio fiendi* with *ratio essendi.*

The Origin of Man

For Christian thought the decisive element in its conception of the origin of man is the fact of God's creativity; the question of method is secondary. What modern science has brought has not ruled out the idea of a divine creative power. Indeed, some of its findings point that way. Such are a dependable universe whose order can be comprehended by reason; an ongoing development in which there appear successive levels of meaning and worth, rising from the physicochemical to the organic and finally to the rational-moral-spiritual; and a purposive, or telic, quality when the movement is viewed as a whole. But to hold to a divine creation, whether of man or the universe, does not necessarily mean a creation out of nothing at some one moment or period of time. God's work of creation is related to natural processes just as his work of revelation and redemption is related to man's nature and the movement of history. Nor can we return to the biblical literalism which saw the first chapter of Genesis, not as a great hymn of faith in a creator God, but as a literal account of the method of creation. We see man as the last stage in a long creative process which in turn leads to a second process, creative-redemptive, a movement in history whose goal is the kingdom of God and the God-intended destiny of man.

When human life appeared on this globe, was it by imperceptible degrees or by some sudden and significant change? We cannot say, and the matter is not vital for religion any more than is the parallel question in relation to the individual: When does the growing life

in the womb become a human being or have a "soul"? Or when does the growing infant become a real human personality? The increasing opinion of scientists would seem to be that man appeared through some specially significant mutation, "a discontinuous variation of a considerable magnitude." Nor are other significant variations excluded. H. F. Osborn holds that such a variation marked the rise of the Cro-Magnon man, who flourished between 25,000 and 40,000 years ago, and who was probably the equal of modern man in mental capacity as he was in his physical development. The important matter for us is not when or under just what conditions man appeared on earth, but the fact that such a being as man is here. Time and mode of appearance do not alter the fact that man is something new and different.

Nor are we especially concerned as to the age of the race. Estimates by scientists are of necessity largely conjectural. They run from a hundred thousand to a million years. In any case the period of which we have historical knowledge, the period of what we call civilization or culture, is but a small fraction of the many millenniums since our race appeared on earth. And we must keep this in mind in our thought about man and God's way with man.

Allied to the question of the origin of the race is that of the origin of the individual soul, a matter much debated by traditional theology. Three different positions were maintained. The creationist theory held that each soul was a distinct creation of God, joined by him to a body which was "naturally" conceived. The theory of pre-existence held that the spirits of men existed before their life on earth, indeed, before the creation of the visible universe. The traducian theory held that the souls of men, like their bodies, came from Adam by propagation or generation, and not by immediate and individual creation; and this seemed to many of the Reformation theologians to give a better ground for the doctrine of the total depravity of the race as coming from Adam's fall.

These are speculative theories. The most obvious mistake is to think of the soul as a kind of spiritual entity joined to the body in

more or less external fashion. Man is a psychophysical unity. The individual person comes by a process of growth, in which body and spirit share, in a manner not unlike that of the race. The traducian theory rightly gives place to the fact of heredity, to man as member of a race; in its extreme deterministic form, however, it tends to suppress the equal significance of the individual and his freedom.

The positive conclusion may be put thus: The individual, like the race, is a creation of God. God has created him as a body-spirit being. Like the race, the individual comes by growth. Every man is linked by heredity to the age-old past of the race, just as in his personal development he is linked with an inherited culture and a social-material environment. God is creatively at work in all these relations but most significantly in the personal life of the self as man comes into conscious relation with his Maker. For God does not create the spirit of man (man the personal being) in some pre-temporal act, nor in and with the soul of Adam, nor yet as something added to the body at conception or birth. The creation of a human personality is an ongoing work, which is at once creation and salvation, which goes on through man's whole life on earth and whose completion looks to the life beyond. The higher meanings of this creative-redemptive process we study in the doctrine of salvation.

The Distinctive Nature of Man

Our great concern as we think of man is not the road by which he has come but the place at which he has arrived. More important than his kinship with the lower animals is his difference from them. Where does this difference lie?

The physical difference of man from other animals is not without significance. His erect posture sets free the fore limbs for tool-making and using. He looks not merely downward and outward but upward. He is the creature with a forehead, and the brain development of the prefontal region has to do with a rational life rather than with one of mere sense impressions and instinctive re-

actions. But these physical characteristics are less important than the inner differences which they suggest.

1. Man is a thinking and speaking animal. The two are inseparably joined and probably developed together. The lower animals receive impressions, form percepts and associations, and have a certain intelligence and memory; they do not form general ideas and do not reason. Whatever the origin of man's first words, his speech is the use of more or less arbitrary symbols for expressing and communicating ideas. Animals express emotions but not ideas, and the expression is by action and sounds, not by spoken word. Rational development is conditioned by language development. Language is at once the instrument of thought and the spur to clearer and deeper thinking.[1]

2. Man is a social being. The gregarious instinct is common in life; animals live in droves, herds, flocks, covies. But only man lives in a society. A true social life requires reason, speech, and some consciousness of personality in one's self and in others. Conversely, it is only in social relations that these indispensable elements of human life can be achieved. If there is to be a society in the true sense, man must first learn to say "I" with an awareness of himself as person, he must learn to say "thou" with a realization of the nature of others as persons, and he must learn to say "we" with a sense of common interests and mutual obligations. Martin Buber defines human society when he says, "By We I mean a community of several independent persons who have reached a self and self-responsibility. . . . Only men who are truly capable of saying *Thou* to one another can truly say *We* with one another." [2] To which we may add, no man can truly say "I" who has not learned to say "thou" and "we."

3. Human life in its more advanced stages is marked by the possession of a social-cultural heritage. Each generation begins with an inheritance from the past, not just of buildings and tools

[1] "The real distinctiveness of man from his nearest allies depends upon his power of building up general ideas and of controlling his conduct in relation to ideals." Patrick Geddes and J. A. Thomson, *Evolution,* p. 99.

[2] *Between Man and Man,* pp. 175, 176.

and roads and tilled fields, but of knowledge, ideas, ideals, and social institutions. Reason, language (spoken and written), and society (home, church, schools, state, and other associations) make possible the handing down of the riches of the past and thus the maintenance of civilization, or culture. The Christian religion is the notable example of how a great tradition of the past lives on as an abiding source of light and power.

4. Man is marked by his power to rule. All life involves some power over environment; man stands apart in the scope and degree of this power. The Genesis story declares that he was created to "fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion." He transcends other creatures by his intelligence, his skill as a toolmaker (*homo faber*), and his capacity for co-operation with his fellow men. In modern times he has enlarged his power over nature almost inconceivably by science, invention, and the machine. His highest creative power, however, has been in the field of the spirit, in the realm of truth and beauty, of social ideals and institutions, of religion and ethics.

Man's power has, indeed, marked limitations. With all his advance he remains a finite and dependent creature and one whose action is conditioned at every step by his environment, natural and social. The most serious limits to his power, however, have their source within himself: in the failure to rule himself, in the failure to see that the highest freedom and power can come only through obedience to God and right, in the failure to see that the way to true power with men is not through self-assertion but through the giving of self in love and united service.

5. Man is a becoming creature, distinguished by a plasticity, a capacity for change and growth which continues through his lifetime. In contrast with other creatures man comes into the world least determined, most helpless. He has a far longer period of infancy. This means not only protracted psychophysical development, but a long period of learning and of profound influence through his social environment—impressing upon him habits, ideals, and character. He belongs to the human race, indeed, from birth; but in a profound sense his real life as man is an achievement calling

for a lifetime of endeavor. The rule for man is, "Never leave growing till the life to come!" [3] Men are often untrue to this law of becoming. With nations as with individuals the growth of youth may be succeeded by inertia, stagnation and decay, or by tragic downfall. But even here there is the chance for new vision and endeavor. Nations and individuals may be reborn and live and grow again.

6. Man is a self-transcending being. That is made possible by the fact of the many worlds to which he belongs. The lesser animals live in the narrow world of the seen, of the here and now. Man transcends time by his memory of the past and by the imagination with which thought and hope and purpose reach into the future. He transcends space, not only by the instruments which extend the range of his senses, but by the imagination and sympathy with which he may become a citizen of the world. He transcends the visible. He can know the world of the unseen, the world of spirit: the world of truth and beauty and goodness and love in human life, the eternal Spirit upon whom all things, visible and invisible, depend.

Here man meets the challenge to his life, the world of "ought" speaking to the world of "is." He knows that he is a dual creature, the man that is and the man that is to be; and that his true life lies in this world of "ought" with its ideals and values. To transcend himself, he now sees, is his very life. As one of George Bernard Shaw's characters puts it: "As long as I can conceive something better than myself, I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life." He transcends the limits of self by means of fellowship. True, there is an apartness in his life; he lives in an inner world which he can never wholly share with others. But he can and does transcend this separateness. There are warm and intimate ties as in home and friendship. There are ties resting on common interests and loyalties and endeavors. There is the broad tie of a common humanity and the closer bond of a common faith and service which

[3] Browning in *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

unites in a world fellowship the followers of Jesus Christ. Man lives in a multidimensional world, and his life is unique in the relations which he may establish in these many dimensions. This is what salvation means; it is setting man right in all these relations so that he may have life. This is the Christian insight, that man's central and supreme relation is to God and that only from this center can all the rest be rightly determined.

7. Man is a self-conscious being. He knows that he is a person; he is the creature that says "I." This "I" is the subject to which all his inner states and outer activities are referred. It is always "I think," "I act." Feelings, thoughts, purposes, deeds, all belong to this "I." The unity is as real as is the complexity of his life. It is, indeed, more real. In feeling, thought, and action there is constant change; but the self always persists through this change. The man of fifty differs from the boy of ten. Yet he says as he looks back: I did that; that was I. In this self-consciousness he knows himself as a being apart. However closely he may be joined to others in love and sympathy, there is an inner citadel which neither foe nor friend can wholly penetrate. "My mind to me a kingdom is."

8. Man is a self-determining being. He is not only a rational being and one that can discern ideals and values; he is able to choose between alternative courses, to set goals for himself, and to shape life and character in the light of these ends. He is a morally free and responsible being.

9. Man is a personal being. That is involved in what has already been said. A person is one who is rational, free, morally responsible, and self-conscious. The concept of personality is basic for the Christian faith. Our God is a personal God. Religion is an I and Thou relation; it is the answer of the human person to the divine Person, a life of fellowship between child and Father. Faith is the word for our answer to God, and faith means a personal response in trust. Love is the word for our life with men, and love means personal fellowship in a life of reverence for other persons and of good will. The circle of religion is determined by these personal pronouns: the *I* of a conscious personal being, responding to a *Thou* of holiness and mercy, saying *You* to our fellow men

of every class and color in recognition of their like status as persons, saying *We* in expression of our human fellowship.

The Principle of Individuality

The terms "individual" and "individuality" call for definition here in relation to the idea of personality. In its primary sense the term "individual" carries no meaning of quality. The individual is literally the indivisible; it is a particular unit, a distinct or discrete being of any kind. When we speak of individuality in man, however, we commonly have in mind those characteristics or qualities which cause one individual to stand out from his fellows. In broad contrast one may say that the individual is that which distinguishes one man from another, the personal is a quality which we share with others.

God is concerned alike with the personal and the individual in man. It is the personal which comes first, and it should be so with us. That which unites us with our fellows as persons is more important than that which distinguishes us. The law of reverence for human personality comes first, and it must transcend every distinction of individuality as well as group differences of class, color, or race. But this does not exclude the significance of the individual man. As person man is sacred in God's sight; as individual he has his distinctive character and his particular place in God's plan. To get the Christian position we must join the two terms and say individual person, or personal individual.

It is interesting to note how widely the principle of individuation obtains in God's creative plan. In the world of life there is not only the vast number of varying species and genera but the variation between members of the same class. On the wide-stretching prairies no two flowers are exactly the same, nor any two leaves in all the trees of the forest. But the real meaning of this principle appears only when we come to man, when we have to do not just with the individual but with the individual who is *person.*

It is now no mere matter of variety. The two words suggest a higher significance of a twofold character. There is first the worth

of the individual as a *person.* That is what lies back of Jesus' warning to those who would bring harm to even one little child. Here is the basis of judgment against all those social ways of our day, seen in their extreme in the totalitarian state but present also in our Western capitalistic order, which treat men as tools or possessions or pawns in the world game of rival state powers or competing economies.

There is, second, the significance of the personal *individual.* God deals, indeed, with mankind in groups; races and nations have their significance for him. But the home offers us the best analogy for God's attitude. The home is a unit, but in the home each child has a place which no one else can take. In the highest act of religion, that of prayer, each soul knows itself as alone with God and one with him in the meeting of I and Thou. In God's creative love he has made each one different, and he calls upon me to be, not a replica of my neighbor, noble saint though he may be, but my own self, realizing the qualities and capacities with which he has endowed me. This individuation is vital to God's plan for his world. In my part in that plan I am to render a distinct service, just as I am to achieve individual character. My role in home and community and church is different from that of any other, and it will remain unfulfilled unless I fulfill it.

This principle of individuality has to be safeguarded against abuse, and on two sides.

There is a religious individualism which sees only one essential relation in religion, that of the individual soul and God. It is the error into which mysticism and pietism are prone to fall, as well as that monasticism whose essential element is suggested by the root meaning of the term *mon*astic. Pietism is least at fault here, for it has always emphasized religious fellowship and traditionally has given a large place to the love and service of fellow men. Nevertheless its tendency has been to think of the knowledge of God and the life with God almost solely as a matter of inner and individual experience. As to mysticism one may find this limitation in so fine a work on the spiritual life as the *Theologia Germanica,* which Luther praised so highly. The question is not, as with this unknown

writer, whether "man should claim nothing for his own, nor crave, will, love or intend anything but God alone." Nor is it the conviction that the knowing of God in immediate and individual fellowship is at the heart of religion. We can still say with the Johannine mystic: "This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God." Knowing God is an individual experience, whatever knowing about God may be.

The real question is that of the nature of the God in whom we believe, what it means to know him, and where we are to find him. God is a God of love, and a God of love is found not in solitude, remote from men, but among his people. Not only does a true knowing of God show itself in the spirit of love but to love is to know God. "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (I John 4:16). Personal and social are not identical, but they are inseparable. As there is no society apart from persons, so there is no personal life apart from social relations. To seek life in the individualistic way is to lose it. Religious individualism is the defect of a virtue. It stresses the fact that we must find God and our own self in individual relation to the Infinite. It fails to see that we tend to miss God and lose our own life when we take the solitary way.

Naturalistic and secularistic individualism is the far more serious danger of our time. It lacks, first, the dimension of God. It is an individualism which knows no authority higher than its own will, no goal save its own desire. It lacks equally the social dimension in any Christian sense. Alike for the cult of the superman and in the idolatry of supernationalism, the common herd is simply to be ruled and exploited. Here the superindividualism of the few means the denial of the rights of the individual in others. A true individualism is possible only through that God who knows me as a person, and in fellowship with my brother men whom I recognize as persons.

Finally, we need to note the powerful social forces at work today which make for the suppression of the individual-personal-human. These are seen in the modern development of industry and the state. Industrial progress has its value for human welfare.

Science and the machine can cause nature to serve man's needs, supply him with comforts, and give him leisure for higher pursuits. But we need to see what this has brought in its train: mass industry, centralized control, city-massed populations, man becoming a part of the machine, turning in his leisure to mass recreation in which he becomes a passive spectator of sports or of moving pictures and television, a passive listener to the radio, or a reader of mass-produced journals. The individual tends to disappear while men become stereotyped specimens, like the products of their machines.

A second tendency working toward this end is the growth of the state in its power and its ever-extending control of human life. This does not necessarily mean totalitarianism. It is found in our Western democracies, and it has its ground in the conditions of modern life. In principle we have long recognized that there are large areas of human concern which cannot be left to private action. So the state has looked out for mail service, highways, currency, sanitary conditions, education, the care of dependents, and other needs. These needs have been increasing rapidly of late years, and there is no indication that democracies like those of western Europe will retreat from this general position. What concerns us is the simple fact that here is another condition of modern life tending to limit rather than advance the free and full expression of individual life. The task of religion in this situation is only the more urgent.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LIKENESS OF GOD IN MAN

PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY ARE PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS. THEY HAVE A PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE FOR RELIGION, BUT they do not express the full Christian conception. The real nature of man is to be discerned only in the light of God. Seen in relation to God two truths become apparent.

Man's Kinship with God

1. Man belongs with God to the realm of personal being. As a person he has reason, the awareness of right and wrong, the power to choose. More than that: he has the capacity to know God and to live in fellowship with him. Old Testament and New clearly assume this. God speaks to men as those who can hear him and know him. And however serious the consequences of sin may be in darkening the understanding and separating man from his Creator, God can reach sinful man and man can return to God.

2. The second truth is that man, who is like God in being a person, is to become like God in spirit and character. That is implied in the Old Testament in the ethical summons of the prophets. The God of righteousness and mercy asks of men that they "do justice, and . . . love kindness" (Mic. 6:8). "I desire steadfast love," he says, "and not sacrifice" (Hos. 6:6). Men are to have the moral quality which belongs to God himself. The New Testament clarifies and deepens this thought. We are children of God not just by his creation but by likeness of spirit. "Love your enemies, . . . that you may be sons of your Father" (Matt. 5:44, 45). Likeness to

God in this second sense becomes the great goal of life. The gospel is not only God's forgiving mercy receiving sinful man; it is God's renewing, recreating power making men over by his Spirit. There is a "new nature, created after the likeness of God" (Eph. 4:24). Our divinely ordained destiny, Paul declares, is "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). And then he points out how men may have this spirit that was in Christ by receiving God's Spirit. Thus the true nature of man lies not just in that with which he begins but in the divinely intended goal.

The question of man's nature as seen in his relation to God is brought out again in the term "children of God," or "sons of God." Are all men children of God? What does it mean to be a son of God? Here again the twofold meaning appears. Used in its highest and fullest meaning, only those are children of God who are like him in spirit, who have been received by him, "adopted," become members of the family of God, sharing the spirit of the Son who is "the firstborn among many brethren." It is in this sense that the New Testament uses the phrase "children of God." Yet in a broader sense there is a Father-son relationship which not even the sin of man destroys. God remains Father in his spirit and attitude always and toward all. His love goes out after them as the shepherd after the lost sheep; he waits to welcome them as the father who goes out to meet the returning prodigal.

In traditional theology the discussion of this general theme of the likeness of man to God has been mainly connected with the phrase "the image of God," and Gen. 1:26-27 has been the classical reference. Interestingly enough, the term does not occur in the Old Testament outside of Genesis. What does the Genesis writer mean when he says, "God created man in his own image"? What was this image of God in the first man? Was it lost in the Fall? Are we to conceive salvation as the restoring of this image?

We must recur to these questions again when we consider the question of sin in its origin, its nature, and its consequences, with the traditional doctrine of the Fall and total corruption. Traditional theology, Roman Catholic and Protestant, held to the perfection of primitive man. Catholic teaching distinguished two aspects

in this perfection. First, God created man as a rational being, a person. This is the image of God, and man did not lose this in the Fall. To this God added as a supernatural gift, or gift of grace, the spiritual likeness to himself. Image and likeness are here distinguished. It was the likeness that was lost in the Fall, and this is similarly restored in man's salvation by a supernatural gift.

The Reformers included all aspects of this primitive perfection under the one term "the image of God." There was place here for the distinction between man's rational nature as man (his *humanitas*) and his spiritual likeness to God, but they were not separated and both were included in the image of God. The fall brought the total loss of the image of God in man and total corruption. The difficulty faced by the reformers in this absolutist doctrine of total corruption lay in the fact that the human race had really retained its *humanitas*, a measure of reason and freedom, of moral perception and responsibility. So it was conceded that a relic of this aspect of the image of God remained.

As a matter of fact, scholars have never reached agreement as to the meaning which Genesis gives to the term, whether it refers to man's nature as a free and a rational being, to a power of rule over creation which he shares with God, or to spiritual likeness.

The New Testament uses the term a number of times, together with other terms conveying the same idea and commonly rendered "the likeness of God." In a few passages this image of God is ascribed to all men (so in 1 Cor. 11:7; Jas. 3:9). In most cases the image, or likeness, is seen not as native endowment but as spiritual goal. Christ is "the image of the invisible God," and we are to be "conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Col. 1:15; Rom. 8:29). More strictly, we "are being changed into his likeness," into a "new nature, which is being renewed" (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10). So the image of God has the same double reference as the idea of sonship and that of the likeness of God.

The essential Christian position can be briefly summarized. We are not concerned with a supposed perfection of primitive man of which we have no knowledge. Two facts stand out for us and are

of deep import. First, man is a rational, moral, spiritual being, belonging to the world of truth and good and God, made to know this and receive this. Second, man has sinned; evil has perverted him but not destroyed his capacity to know and respond. With these facts goes our Christian conviction: the real man, the true man, is not to be found by looking back. The true humanity lies before us; it is found in the Son to whose spirit we are to be conformed. God's creative-redemptive work began when that being appeared for whom this higher life of oneness with God was possible. The creation of this man in the real likeness of God, the overcoming of evil, the molding of man by God's Spirit, this lies ahead.

Human Nature in Its Possibilities

Is human nature good or evil? The question is not an academic one, nor is it narrowly religious. It is vital to the educator, the social worker, the legislator and statesman—to everyone who is concerned with human welfare. Two facts are obvious. First, evil is here, widespread, deep-rooted, tragic. Second, evil in its most tragic forms has its source and being in men. That is not to minimize the suffering which springs from nature or which is related to our "natural" life, but this too springs largely from man's sin and folly and could be dealt with if the problem of man himself were settled.

The really vital question, however, is not whether human nature is bad or good, but rather this: What are the possibilities in human nature? Can anything be done with man?

1. The answers to this question vary widely. One is given in the doctrine of total depravity as represented by Augustine and Calvin. They held that since God was perfect at once in goodness and power, the world as it left his hands was perfectly good, and this included man. Adam's sin altered this totally. By that one deed Adam's nature was changed from wholly good to wholly evil, and that nature was passed on to his descendants. In that deed not simply Adam but the whole race was made evil. Sometimes it was assumed that Adam acted for mankind as its "federal head"; sometimes the race was conceived as really present in Adam. In any case the effect was absolute, and it reached every last descendant.

It involved not only the total absence of good but the active presence of evil in every impulse, desire, and deed, beginning with infancy. As the Westminster Confession put it: "We are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."

The religious motive back of this doctrine is obvious. It was an effort to assert the seriousness of sin, the fact of man's utter dependence upon God as the source of all life and help, and the doctrine of salvation by grace as against all thought of man's deed or merit. But historically, biblically, psychologically, and religiously the doctrine demands criticism. Historically there is no evidence of a primitive man, perfectly good, succeeded by a race wholly evil. Biblically the doctrine rests on an assumption of verbal inspiration, a misconception of the nature and purpose of the Genesis stories, and the failure to seek the doctrine of man and sin at its proper place in the gospel of Christ and the New Testament faith. Further, the Genesis story indicates no such absolute change; Old Testament and New both assume the presence in man of some knowledge of God, some capacity to respond when God speaks to man, and a desire for God which appears in man even in the midst of dominant evil. Psychologically we cannot conceive how one deed could utterly transform not only a man's own nature but that of a race. Finally, the morally evil is handed down through the social heritage, not by biological heredity.

Our most serious criticism is the religious one. If man were totally depraved, he would be not only wholly given to evil and averse to all good, but wholly lacking in capacity for apprehension of the truth, for the knowing of God, and for response to him. Salvation would then be solely a matter of divine decision and deed. It would not be the God of truth speaking to man's mind, or the God of righteousness speaking to conscience, or the God of mercy speaking to the heart, but the God of sovereign and irresistible power. So we have as a necessary concomitant Calvin's "irresistible grace," with its inner contradiction of meaning; for grace is a term that belongs to the realm of spirit and freedom, and irresistible to the world of the physical, of force or external compulsion. Simi-

larly involved was the idea of double predestination. Since salvation rests wholly on God's determination, the fate of the lost as of the saved is fixed from eternity by his decree.

At the opposite extreme are certain modern positions which contravene vital elements in the Christian position. There is the romantic optimism, not so apparent as a generation ago, which sees human nature as inherently good, needing only freedom of action. There is the naturalism which repudiates the "repressions" of religion and ethics as at once impossible and evil. The "natural" is good; the watchword is self-expression. The revolt, especially pronounced in the field of the sexual, is against all authority, whether external or inner and ethical. The criticism of John Dewey is in point: "Although appetites are the commonest things in human nature, the least distinctive or individualized, they identify unrestraint in satisfaction of appetite with free realization of individuality." [1] In sharp contrast is the pessimism, widely current today, which looks at the widespread evils, finds their source in man, and sees the state of man as hopeless because of his incurable stupidity, selfishness, and folly.

The common error of these last views, alike optimistic and pessimistic, is the failure to see the divine dimension of life, the world of the eternal Spirit to which we belong, in the light of which our sinfulness is judged and the reality and power of evil in our life are seen, but in whose light there is hope for man.

2. Traditional theology has tended to think of human nature almost solely as a problem, concerning itself with man's evil nature, with the fact of sin and its power. But human nature represents possibilities, not simply a problem. That is the assumption of educational leaders. "Rules can be obeyed and ideals realized only as they appeal to something in human nature and awaken in it an active response." [2] It is the presupposition, too, of all who work for social change in the democratic spirit, seeking for justice and peace and freedom, believing that high social ends can be achieved only through intelligent, free, and devoted co-operation on the

[1] *Human Nature and Conduct,* p. 7.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 2.

part of the common people of all nations. In neither case is there a blinking at difficulties. In both there is a basic confidence in the possibilities that lie in humanity, the alternative to which is a defeatist pessimism or recourse to an autocracy which sacrifices the highest goods.

The Christian religion shares this confidence in man. Its unique contribution is twofold: a deeper insight into the power and meaning of evil (its doctrine of sin); faith in a God who lifts men into fellowship with himself and gives direction and power to their life (its doctrine of God and salvation). But while it sees the evil and the need of saving help, it affirms the presence in man of that to which God speaks, which makes answer to God, and in and through which God can work. While it recognizes the utter dependence of man, affirming that all is of God, it sees in man not a passive object upon which God works with resistless power, but the personal being who can respond to God.

3. In considering man as the possible subject of salvation our first concern is with the impulse-instinct side of his nature. It is this that comes first to development alike in the race and in the individual. Here we are linked to other forms of life. Here is the driving power that has assured man's survival in the struggle for existence. The powerful biological urges are here. There is truth in Schiller's word: "While philosophers are disputing over the government of the world, hunger and love are performing the task."

But there are other drives than the biological. There is the craving for fellowship, a "togethering impulse" which is more than sex appeal or the herd instinct, which appears in the relations of home, community, friendship, and endless other associations. There are other hungers than that for food, and in these other cravings man's distinctive nature is seen: the hunger for beauty, goodness, truth, justice, and God. The cave drawings of the Cro-Magnon race show how early the sense of beauty and creative art appeared. We know, too, that we cannot posit any time in recorded history when these higher impulses were wholly wanting.

How shall we evaluate this impulse-instinct side of man's nature

with its powerful drives? First, it must be said that none of these impulses or instincts as such is either good or bad. Here are the impulse to self-centeredness and the urge to self-preservation. Their biological role is apparent; they are the condition of life preservation and advance. They appear in infancy; for the babe the mother is first of all the source of needed food, and it probably thinks of nothing else as it clutches the mother's breast. There is a natural and quite naïve egocentricity here. But this is a needed first stage. Soon other appeals will come, that of mother love first of all. The child will learn that self-assertion is to give place to self-achievement, to loyalty to a higher self. There is a fighting instinct which seems wholly evil. It is commonly stirred in men when others oppose them or block the way to the satisfaction of some desire. Anger, hate, cruelty, and other passions unite with it, but it may take another form. It may aim at high goals. It may use the weapons of the spirit. It may mean that we "watch and fight and pray" to overcome evil and achieve a higher life. It may be a warfare directed against great social evils. On the other hand, the impulses which we think of as spiritual, as against those which belong to the "natural" man, may suffer perversion and work evil. Sympathy may become maudlin sentimentalism. Affection, weak and unwise, may bring harm to its object. The religious sentiment, the sense of the holy, may take the form of enslaving superstition and may be wholly divorced from the ethical.

We cannot then say that human nature as such is bad or good. Man is a being in the making. In his capacities and possibilities he bears the image of God, but the real image of God, the full personality, waits to be achieved. And that comes through conflict: conflict with the world about him, tension and conflict within himself. The elements needed for this struggle, on the human side, are found in man.

(1) There is the drive that impels to action. It appears as the will to live, seeking food, shelter, safety, and other satisfactions. But more and more it takes the form of an awareness of higher goods and the desire for them. There is a higher "will to live in us." Truth, right, beauty, love, God are not merely ideals above us;

they are felt needs and impelling desires within. (2) There is the capacity to discern values, to distinguish higher and lower and choose between them. (3) There is the capacity to know a world of higher power, of needed help, the God who is at once supreme power and highest good. And with this higher world man can enter into living relation. Here are more than "natural" urges blindly followed.

To this recognition of man's capacity for higher life certain other truths must be added. (1) All man's life is from God. These capacities are the gift of the creator God; wherever there are vision of truth, knowledge of God, high ideal, and real achievement, this is the work of the redeemer God. (2) Sin has entered into this scene, and sin is more than occasional failure or individual misdeed. Sin is a spirit and a power of evil, something which affects the "nature" of man, corrupting and destroying, and which shapes the social order in which he lives.

Yet even here there remains that distinctive character which sets man off from other creatures. No beast can sink so low as man, yet at his lowest he can know his need, answer the God who speaks to him, and rise to a life with God. Man is a creature in the making. That is true of primitive savage and present-day sinner, of the individual and the race.

CHAPTER FOUR

MORAL FREEDOM

FREEDOM IS ONE OF THE GREAT WORDS IN MAN'S VOCABULARY. BROADLY DEFINED, FREEDOM MEANS THE RIGHT OR POWER to choose and act according to our desires without compulsion or constraint. There are, however, different kinds of freedom. There is physical freedom. There is what may be called psychological freedom, the freedom to follow inclination or desire. These two may be called natural freedom; they belong to the lesser animals as well as man and imply no moral insight or power of contrary choice. A higher form of freedom is found in man's social life. We think first here of political freedom as represented by democracy, a freedom which is one of the late achievements of man, as yet won by only a small part of our race. With this has come the struggle for other forms of social freedom: freedom of conscience, of worship, of assemblage, of utterance of opinion and access to the truth. These all belong to the democratic way of life. In this sphere economic freedom is becoming increasingly important: not mere competitive freedom in which the weak go to the wall and the strong win the goods of life and control of others, but the freedom of a fair and equal opportunity to win a livelihood.

The peculiar Christian concern is with freedom in the moral-spiritual realm. Man has the power of contrary choice; he is able to halt action, reflect on varying goods and goals, and in the light of such reflection choose one rather than another course of conduct.

That applies to the particular action but even more to the total course and end of his life. It is true that most of man's conduct moves unthinkingly along the line of habit and in accordance with the conventions of his own social group, but the power to make such choice is present. It is the assumption of high religion that he can do this. It is the task of religion to bring to him this privilege and obligation. It is God's challenge to man, that of Person to person: "Son of man, stand upon your feet" (Ezek. 2:1); "Come now, let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18); "Choose this day" (Josh. 24:15). We call this rational freedom because it demands reflection as to the meaning and end of conduct. We call it moral freedom because it involves a choice as to the goods or values to which we will give our allegiance.

Determinism

Determinism denies moral freedom. The theories of determinism vary according to the way in which the forces are conceived which are held to determine human behavior. They agree in asserting that in a given situation only one course of action is possible. In a mechanistic determinism the restraint or compulsion is that of outer forces. Metaphysical determinism conceives of an absolute control through some divine Power or through some fate which has fixed in advance the course of events. Psychological determinism is the most common form today of the denial of moral freedom. In a given situation the course of action, it holds, is determined by the strongest motive. The motive in turn is determined by what the man is in himself plus the action of his environment upon him. A reference to the factor of personal character seen as the result of previous choices does not alter the situation or save the idea of moral responsibility. For the first choice, equally with those which follow, is determined necessarily by the same factors of individual nature plus environment.

The consequences of the determinist position should be plainly noted.

1. There are its moral implications. Personal responsibility goes by the board. Sin is a tragic reality with tragic consequences, but from this standpoint the individual cannot rightly be blamed. His fate was fixed from the beginning by factors beyond his control—heredity and environment. Judas could not have acted differently any more than Paul or Peter. That means, of course, the repudiation of our deepest moral conviction; for this appears, not when a man says, "I did that, and it was wrong," but when he declares, "I did that, and I should and could have done otherwise."

2. We must face the implications for faith. No adequate theodicy is possible on this basis, for the ultimate responsibility for the human deed rests upon the creator God who made man and his environment. One can only appeal, with Calvin, to the inscrutable decrees of God. Nor can the dilemma be escaped by repudiating the position long enough to ascribe freedom to Adam before the fall. Thomas Hardy draws the terrible but logical consequence of this his own position in the closing words of his *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, when Tess on the scaffold pays the penalty for the crime which was her deed but in no real sense her responsibility: "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess."

3. Finally, with consistent determinism we sacrifice not only the ethical and the religious but the rational. Not only physical happenings and moral choices but rational processes would be strictly determined. If that is so, then there is no longer a reason which weighs and reflects and decides what is true. The category of the true disappears with that of the right. Then we have only opinions which, however much they may clash, are equally inevitable. The very argument for determinism is absurd if the determinist's ideas are all a predetermined result.

Fortunately, while some people do not live up to their announced principles, with others the practice rises above them. So the determinists in daily life and social practice reason with others, exhort to individual improvement and social reform, and

assign praise and blame, assuming rationality, moral discernment, freedom of choice, and responsibility quite like the rest.

What is needed is a clearer understanding on both sides of where the issue lies, and first as to what this assertion of freedom does and does not involve.

What Freedom Involves

1. It does not mean an unconditional power enabling a man at any moment to choose one course or another with equal ease. We begin life with a given heredity. We live in a given environment, natural and social, which is constantly and powerfully working upon us. Previous choices have shaped our present character. There is no "freedom of the will" as a separate "faculty" in man or as a power working in independence of his world. We are dealing with the whole man and his whole world, with feelings and intelligence as well as will, with the heritage of the past and the total environment. We must think organically and not atomistically. Man's choosing is never unrelated or unmotivated.

2. The theory of moral freedom holds that these factors, however powerful, are not of themselves determinative. Neither the individual act nor a man's final fate is fixed for him, whether by divine decree, a mechanistic world order, or a combination of heredity and environment. Man is no mere passive resultant of forces; he is a free actor in this world. He does not always exercise his powers, but he can halt action, reflect on different courses open to him, and choose between them. Further, transcending the moment he can choose long-range goals and commit himself to certain ideals. Finally, and of supreme importance, he can ally himself with a world of higher spiritual forces in whose light he gains guidance for his long-range action, by whose help he is able to transcend these limiting conditions, especially the limits of his own weakness and his own wrong tendencies. Here is where the Christian doctrine of salavation comes in, not merely as forgiveness for past sins but as a way of help. But the help which thus comes

to a man is not an impersonal force. It is God, coming to man with his truth and mercy and saving grace, speaking to man as *person.* And it is effective only with man's personal response, his understanding and free decision.

The real issue in the debate between determinism and moral freedom is that of the underlying world view, more particularly, as William James pointed out, the question as to what makes a rational world, or a world of order.[1] The common presupposition of science, philosophy, and religion (except for a thoroughgoing agnosticism) is that this world is basically one of order or reason. Otherwise ordered thought or knowledge would be impossible. Determinists hold that this involves an order which is definite and fixed in every part, with no contingency, no "loose play of parts." Moral freedom for them constitutes an irrational exception to this order.

But there is another conception of the rationality of the universe. It recognizes a double order. (1) There is an underlying "natural" order. It includes the spiritual world as well as the material. That which is behaves according to its nature and in dependable fashion. Things hang together; so do ideas. Hence we can have science, agriculture, industry, society. It is an order of cause and effect, of rational sequence which obtains in the moral world as well as the physical. (2) The second order is one that waits to be achieved. It works within the "natural" order but it transcends it as the workman transcends his tools and materials. It involves contingencies, higher possibilities, a certain free play. For the determinist everything is settled, is given in the now. The future simply brings to light what is already here. Time is meaningless. There is nothing creative in history, simply an unfolding. The play moves on to the end, but every scene, every action, is determined from the beginning. For those who hold to the idea of freedom this order is not an all-determining force or a prison wall; it is the necessary condition for free and effective action aiming at a higher order. The

[1] *The Will to Believe and Other Essays,* pp. 150-52.

higher order is that of an achieved moral and spiritual life, of moral character won only through freedom, of a free fellowship of faith and love and righteousness. There is a God who is working out this higher order; the kingdom of God is his deed and gift. But he works on the level of freedom, not compulsion. The initial forms of this "freedom" appear in the element of contingency, recognized by science. It is seen more clearly with the coming of life. In man it appears as conscious, rational, moral freedom. He is the creature who can discern the goals of the creator God, the Father who "is working still" (John 5:17); and he can work with God in realizing them. Freedom is "the faculty of producing the new and of realizing meaning." [2]

Of vital importance in this discussion is the distinction between "formal" and "real" freedom. Following an old usage, we mean by the former the moral freedom which we have been considering. We have seen that it is necessary for high achievement, moral and spiritual. Life on earth is life in the making, and it involves constant choice and constant conflict, conflict between ourselves and our world, between opposing ideals which invite our allegiance, between the two natures which we find within ourselves. Such conflict is the necessary road which we must take, but it is not the goal. That goal is harmony, unity, wholeness in all our relations and above all within ourselves. Facing such conflict, the power to choose is vital, "Life's business being just the terrible choice," in Browning's words. But the psalmist knew the goal, not as conflict but as victory: "Unite my heart to fear thy name" (Ps. 86:11). The choice, made with effort at first, but constantly repeated, becomes the fixed character. The enemy ceases to be a threat. There is mastery over one's world, over self. In this inner unity and growing power there is real freedom. *Posse non peccare, magna est libertas*, said Augustine. That is moral freedom, to be able not to

[2] Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, p. 252. Cf. Emil Brunner, *The Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 62: "God wills to be Lord; the *Gloria Dei* shall be reflected in men: this is the dominion, the Kingdom of God. He can be Lord in the perfect sense only when he finds the fullest devotion given to him by those who have the fullest freedom, that is to say, in love."

sin. *Non posse peccare, maxima est,* he added. That is real liberty, not to be able to sin. True, so long as we live here on earth, we must sing, "O watch, and fight, and pray." Real freedom is a flying goal. But its increasing realization is a basic element in Christian salvation. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2. See also John 8:31-36; Rom. 7:8.) The foe of freedom, freedom of every form, is that which denies or hinders life and its free expression. The greatest foe is not external compulsion but inner division and limitation. The fullest freedom, "real freedom," comes only as we are whole within.

In this study of man and of moral freedom reference must be made to heredity and environment as important conditioning factors. Darwinian evolution sees man as the heir of long ages of biological development. Weismann's theory of the germ plasm and the Mendelian conception of inherited unit characters led many to conclude that what the individual is and what he may become are determined for him at birth. Anthropologist and sociologist have often laid a similar stress on environment, physical and social, as the determining factor in the development of the race and the individual.

Our doctrine of man and of salvation needs to give consideration to these factors. Body and spirit, heredity and environment, individual decision and achievement, all enter into the making of man. Thus Christian thought should be concerned with a sane eugenics, as also with social environment. Individualistic religion of the pietistic or mystical type has often overlooked these, as has that theology which sees in religion only the vertical dimension, that of the soul and God. Biological heredity, cultural heritage, social and physical environment, these all enter into God's way of working for the making of man; man does not live and grow *in vacuo.* God has created this order in which man's life is set, an order which brings not only problems for human life but needed conditions and means for its achievement.

But man is no mere resultant of heredity and environment. He

has it in him to meet the problems which they bring and to use the opportunities which they furnish. As individual he may make choice of environment, as he does when he enters the fellowship of the Church. And he may alter the social environment by co-operative action through home and Church and state.

PART TWO

SIN

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATURE OF SIN

GOD, MAN, SIN, SALVATION ARE CENTRAL WORDS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. THE REALISTIC FACING OF THE PROBlem of sin is the first mark of the Christian doctrine of salvation. The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches issued its report under the title *Man's Disorder and God's Design.* The secular world, too, is pervaded by this thought of aggressive evil and the summons to conflict, and never more than today. Even when our world wars give way to a time of "peace," the sense of peril remains with a call to preparation for conflict. Increasingly, thoughtful men are aware of the evil that inheres in men: selfishness, ignorance, prejudice, fear, pride, greed, suspicion, hatred. And they realize that this is the seedbed for our social ills.

The Fact of Sin

The sense of sin, however, has decreased rather than increased. In Christian thought the sense of sin has two elements: first, seeing evil in the sight of God; second, facing the fact of personal responsibility and guilt. Sin is responsible wrongdoing and wrong being as seen in the light of God. The modern man is not concerned with sin. He looks at individual evil or failures, and consults the sociologist or psychologist. He studies social ills, and tries to change environment or alter laws and institutions. When it comes to conflict between classes, groups, races, or nations, his concern is to assert the rightness of his group and the wrongness of his op-

ponents, and to secure his rights by some kind of compulsion, civil or military.

Christianity is by no means unconcerned with the social and psychological side, but it senses a deeper problem and it begins at another place. Its message is, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). There is a new and better life for men and nations, but first we must repent. The fact of sin comes first—not just the idea of evil, but evil as man's doing and as sin against God.

The reasons for the lack of this sense of sin are plain. The common root is the want of a vital faith in God. To most men God is a distant and rather vague being; to many he is wholly unreal. Their working creed, if not their philosophy, is naturalistic and secularistic. Fellow men and social relations, the world of nature and its gifts, science with its technical achievements, these are real and important. With this goes the lack of a sense of absolute moral authority. That is most plain in totalitarian countries where the state determines what is right and wrong, recognizing no higher authority than its own will. But even where the old words are retained, men have tended more and more to lose the idea of a moral order which has the right to command the nation and business and the individual. There is a pragmatism which declares that that is right which works. More common is the simple assumption that our first concern in international, industrial, and political matters, as well as individually, must be with our own profit or advance. Sometimes a deterministic viewpoint enters in. The approach may be scientific, with the stress on heredity; or social, with the emphasis on environment; or psychological, with the appeal to native instincts or urges. The conclusion is the same: if a man's life is thus determined for him, it is foolish to talk of sin and guilt.

The Church has not been without blame in this situation. Sometimes there has been a sentimental misunderstanding of the love of God, a failure to proclaim his holiness, a blindness to the stern realities of the moral order of the universe.

There has been gain, however, as well as loss. Thoughtful men

in these last years have been driven to see the depths of evil to which the human spirit can descend, and how whole peoples could be involved. We have come within the Church to a clearer recognition of individual as well as group responsibility and guilt in these matters of social evils. The debauching of men for commerical profit through alcohol and drugs and prostitution, economic exploitation of the masses by those with wealth and power, the subjection and exploitation of backward races by more powerful nations, the cult of a blind and selfish nationalism, race prejudice and discrimination, and the whole war system, these are sins of our collective life and we are responsible for them.

Conceptions of Sin

A clear doctrine of sin is vital for Christian thought. Christianity is a religion of redemption. Redemption looks two ways. It is at once deliverance from evil and the gift of life, and the latter cannot come without the former. Man needs remaking, not simply making. The ancient world to which Christianity came was well aware of its evil plight, and there were innumerable religions of redemption. Christianity won out, not only by the remedy which it offered, but by its diagnosis of the disease. Its older rival was that philosophy which saw the source of human ill in ignorance and the way of deliverance in knowledge. More appealing and more widespread were the mystery religions which saw man's ills chiefly in the suffering and death which belonged to his finiteness and offered deliverance through sacrament and secret lore and mystical experience. Christianity saw where the problem lay in the sin which separated men from God, divided them from each other, and destroyed the sinner. Christianity recognizes the other ills which afflict man: weakness, immaturity, ignorance, want, suffering, disease, and death; and it envisages their overcoming. But it sees as crucial the problem of sin. A study of sin and its consequences must therefore precede our study of salvation.

The basic idea of sin in the Hebrew-Christian tradition is that of disobedience, man's refusal of the will and way of God. But

within that tradition there have been wide differences, beginning within the Bible itself. Men have differed in their thought of what God asked of men, and this in turn has rested upon differences in the conception of God. Legalism sees God as sovereign giver of laws, his requirement as the strict keeping of these rules, salvation as the divine reward for this obedience.

In the Old Testament these laws mingle the ethical and the ceremonial. Jesus' noble summary of the law was taken from Deuteronomy. The Ten Commandments with their high ethical demands are central. There is the demand for justice and mercy in human relations, extended to the foreigner as well as the Jew. But side by side with this are prohibitions against planting two kinds of seed in one field and mingling two kinds of thread in one garment, with rigid injunctions as to ceremonially clean and unclean foods (Matt. 22:37-40; Deut. 24:17; 22:9-11).

The prophets did not inveigh against ceremonial and ritual as such. What they brought was a clearer vision of God as righteous and merciful and of his demand that this spirit should rule the life of men, that men should "do justice, and . . . love kindness, and . . . walk humbly with . . . God." Legalism was by no means all of Judaism in Jesus' day, but it was the dominant concept of the leaders, the scribes and Pharisees. To this Jesus opposed the inner spirit, the spirit of sons who were true children of their Father in humility, trust, devotion to God, and love of men. Sin was the inner spirit opposed to all this: pride, anxiety, disobedience, selfishness (Luke 18:9-14; Matt. 5:43-48; 6:24-34).

Closely akin to legalism are the moralistic and atomistic conceptions of sin resting on corresponding notions of man's life. Moralism emphasizes man instead of God. It misses the essential nature of sin which is perceived only in the light of God. Like legalism it stresses the act rather than the inner spirit and attitude which make the real man. The atomistic view of conduct goes with this, Pelagius being the classical representative. Pelagius was right in stressing the ethical and personal, but his conception of these was shallow. Conduct was a succession of separate and independent

deeds, which left man independent of the past when new occasion for action arose. But man's sins are not a mere succession of acts; the whole man acts and the whole past enters in to shape the man and condition his future action.

Crucial for the conception of man is the relation of individual and social, alike in their tension and their mutual completion. The one-sided stress on individual or social brings errors in the concept of sin. The idea of the individual human personality and his significance emerged slowly. So we have the earlier concept of sin in which the individual is merged in the group. It is not the individual who sins but the family, the clan, the nation. The individual as part of the group, however, shares in the guilt and penalty. So the whole family is condemned for Achan's sin (Josh. 7:20-25). The opposite extreme is individualism, or atomism. It fails to see that no man lives wholly in and by himself. In varying degrees we help to shape the thought and life of the group, of family and community and nation, as in turn we are shaped by them. Here is group sin. Very often in our day the sin lies in not sharing in the group life and thought, in the attempt to evade responsibility. The reality of sin and guilt is here, though God alone can judge the degree.

The Nature of Goodness

We cannot know the nature of sin by looking at sin alone, for sin is essentially negative. It is present only as men see the good and refuse it. To understand sin, therefore, we must ask what that right attitude of life is to which sin is opposed. What is goodness? Who is the good man?

1. The first mark of the good man is loyalty. To be good means squaring our life with our convictions, saying "yes" to the highest that we know and living it. Our common speech recognizes this when we use such words as upright, straight, square, on the level. These figures all imply a standard of judgment and loyalty to it. No man is really a man, really human, until he knows something higher than himself; no man is a good man except as he obeys

this vision. His knowledge may be inadequate; the test is loyalty, not knowledge. On the other hand, because he knows that his true life is found in loyalty to the highest, he will be eager to know. He will be far removed from those who say complacently: "I do what I think is right." The will to do God's will involves the will to know God's will. It calls for the humble spirit, the open mind, and the earnest search. In turn, obedience to the light is the way to more light. "If any man's will is to do his will, he shall know" (John 7:17). Nor does loyalty as such suffice; it must be loyalty to the highest—for religion, loyalty to the Most High. There are lesser loyalties and higher, and the lesser loyalty may involve treason to the highest. We have seen in our day how loyalty to class or race or nation could become treason to God and humanity and the source of endless evil. Even where no evil is directly involved, the lesser loyalty may stand in the way of the higher. So we have the uncompromising word of Jesus: "No one can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

2. The good man is unselfish. The positive and more adequate word is love, love as good will, positive, creative, extended toward all. We may call loyalty, or obedience, the "formal" aspect of goodness, love the "material" aspect. For the Christian the two aspects are inseparable, for loyalty to a God of love means the rule of love in man. Only thus are we children of our Father (Matt. 5:28-48).

3. Faith is the third mark of a good man. Many would admit the criteria of loyalty and good will and question that of faith. Usually it is the misconception of the meaning of faith which lies back of this. Faith is no mere matter of belief, whether resting on evidence or going beyond this. For religion faith is man's response of trust and surrender when he finds himself challenged by a Being higher than himself who speaks to him at once as power and goodness. It does not exclude reflection, criticism, and experiment; rather, it invites these. It roots in an inner conviction which calls

for trust and adventure. It challenges man to do if he would know. It calls for decision and action as the condition of life. Here is the final challenge, the great invitation. Man's no to this challenge is the great refusal.

These basic aspects of goodness make plain the Christian viewpoint. It is not the passing deed that counts but the abiding spirit and motive which lie behind it, the life attiude which determines conduct and molds character. This concept of goodness is ethical and dynamic. At the same time it is deeply religious. It is the Christian faith that in some form or other God speaks to every man. He comes as the summons of the good and the offer of help. The good man is he who says "yes" to this demand of obedience and the summons to believe and trust. The Christian answer as to how man may attain this goodness will come with our study of salvation.

The Christian Conception of Sin

It is in the light of the Christian idea of goodness that its conception of sin is to be understood. Sin is responsible wrongdoing viewed in its relation to God. It is a religious term; its meaning is seen in the light of God. It is an ethical term; it is concerned with justice and mercy and the humble walk with God, not with ritual performance or ceremonial purity or correctness of belief. It is determined by the spirit of a man, by attitude and character and not the isolated deed. It is wrongdoing seen in the light of God, but it includes every relation of life, a man's responsibility to his neighbor and himself as well as to God.

The essential nature of sin may now be defined more closely.

1. Sin is disobedience. It is man's No to the call of the higher. Man became man when first he knew something higher than himself, when there came, however dimly, a vision of God and good and the realization that here was his true life. That moment was the real creation of man in the image of God. Sin came with man's refusal to follow that call. That is still the nature of sin. It does not mean that a man with full knowledge of the good makes a

deliberate choice of evil as his way of life. Few, if any, are the men who say with conscious purpose, "Evil, be thou my good." The knowledge may be meager. The particular choice may be simply part of a general pattern of living made with little awareness of its meaning. But some awareness there is, at the moment or in earlier decisions, of a summons to good and the choice of one's own will and way.

What often hides from us the presence of sin all about us and its nature as disobedience is the fact that the common man has little thought of avowed and positive opposition to God and good. He does not consciously adopt a wrong life purpose. It is lack of purpose which marks his life; it is indifference, moral inertia, aimless drifting. But what are these but ways of saying "no" to God? There are some matters about which we do not need to decide, but not this one. God summons us to make a basic decision. "Choose this day whom you will serve," he says. Jesus condemned the sin of the empty room, or rather the folly of supposing that life's room could be kept empty, that the evil spirit could be driven out without making place for God. Nor is it simply a matter of the individual life. It is the challenge of God summoning man to stand for him or against him in his fight against evil and his purpose of good. Here "neutrality is iniquity." This is the meaning of Browning's severe judgment in "The Lost Leader."

> Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
> One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
> One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
> One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!

There is no goodness that is merely absence of evil. Our word "virtue" derives from the Latin *virtus*, which denotes vigor and valor and efficiency. God demands decision for good against evil and wholehearted devotion and open confession. What fails of this is sin. "He who is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23). The apathy and indifference of the many has been a greater ob-

stacle to the advance of the kingdom of God than the active and aggressive evil of the few. To that may be added the fact that the goodness of "good men" is so often a poor, halfhearted matter. "He was not a bad man," we read of Jean Christophe's father, "but a half-good man, which is perhaps worse." [1] Says Browning:

> The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
> Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin.[2]

2. Sin is selfishness, or egocentricity. This may not be the sole word to describe the inner spirit of sin, but it is the most significant. It is this that lies back of disobedience. Man refuses the claims upon his life, the claims of love and devotion, of God and the right, because he wants his life for himself. It is the root of pride, setting self over God, counting self as sufficient. There are forms of sin that seem much darker: envy, greed, lust, hate, cruelty, murder. We speak of a diabolical spirit. Yet selfishness, egocentricity, lies back of all these. The evil man does not want evil for its own sake. He does not say, "Evil, be thou my good," or my god. He simply wants his own good, the satisfaction of his own desires, the supremacy of his own will and way. His desire may become greed, his passion a cruel lust. If others stand in his way, then anger and hate and murder may follow. It is so with the more negative sins noted above: inertia, insensitiveness, indifference. These, too, root in a selfishness that will not sacrifice its own ease and self-interest. Men like this are not opposed to the advance of right and the good of others, but they will not assume the cost of pain and toil, the risk of personal loss. So they rank with those "wretched souls" whom Dante found before the gates of hell, shut out alike from hell and heaven, the men

> who lived
> Without or praise, or blame, with that ill band

[1] Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe*, I, 30.
[2] *The Statue and the Bust*, st. 83. Cf. Luke 12:35.

Of angels mixed, who nor rebellious proved,
Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
Were only.

3. Sin is wrongdoing seen in its relation to God. Sin is an ethical term; it concerns man's free and responsible choice. But sin is more than ethical; it is a religious term, and its deepest meaning is seen only when it is viewed in the light of God. This is not, of course, a question of either-or, of an ethical or a religious concept. What is needed is a thoroughgoing ethical concept of God, on the one hand, and a realization of the depth of meaning which is given to the world and life by our faith in God.

As to the first: God is not arbitrary sovereignty, giving commands, asking submission, demanding for himself sevenths of time and tithes of income, with formal acknowledgment of his sovereign power. God is love and truth and righteousness; these are what he asks of men. To refuse these is to sin against God. But there is more than this, and this "more" gives to sin its deeper, distinctively religious meaning. God is goodness in a Person; he is the Father who calls men to love and trust, to worship as well as to obey, to live with him as his children. Sin is the refusal of this claim of God.

But we must add to this: God's goodness is active, creative, redemptive; it is goodness moving toward a high goal. In the love of God, in the fellowship of the Church, in the following of Christ and the service of men, our lives are linked to this high end. Only in this divine perspective can we see the full meaning of human life. And only so can we realize the full meaning of sin, which has too often been obscured by a one-sided stress on sovereignty, sometimes joined to a legalistic tendency. This is the wonder and the glory of the Christian faith, that it not only links our human life to God in personal obedience and trust, but joins it through our faith and service with God's great purpose for his world. Sin, then, is not a matter of particular deeds or of merely individual relations; it is the denial of that great purpose of God.

Sin in its deepest and most significant aspect may therefore be described as unbelief, or unfaith. These terms must be understood

in the distinctive Christian sense. It is not a matter of beliefs in the common sense of accepting religious ideas or doctrines, but of man's response in trust and obedience to the God who speaks to him. We are dealing here with the heart of the Christian conviction. God speaks to men "in many and various ways" (Heb. 1:1). He offers men forgiveness and help, light and life. He offers himself in life-giving fellowship. All that is right and true and good comes to us in him. He shows men the meaning of life and calls them to fulfill their vocation. To refuse him is to refuse alike the gift and the task of life. It is to separate ourselves from him who is life. Unbelief in the biblical sense is man's refusal to respond to the God who speaks to him, the refusal of trust and obedience. It is the opposite of that faith through which men are saved. This is the great refusal; this is sin in its final meaning. As faith is the open door to God and the beginning of all good, so the refusal of faith denies God and good and closes the door to life. So the crucial word in Jesus' lament over Jerusalem is not his denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees but his judgment on the people: "you would not!" (Matt. 23:37. Cf. Luke 23:35, "And the people stood by, watching.")

To speak of sin as selfishness, disobedience, and unbelief is not to conceive it as being composed of three parts, or elements. Sin is a basic attitude, the assertion of self as against the claim of God and good. On the positive side it is the self-centered life. That leads in turn to the negative side: the refusal of obedience to the right and good, which in its ultimate meaning is the refusal of God.

4. This basic sinful attitude takes many different forms, forms as diverse as are the many relations which make up life. It is an easy mistake to take one of these aspects and make it the substance of the whole. That was done by the older theologians who, following I John 3:4, defined sin simply as lawlessness. But God is more than lawgiver, and sin in relation to God includes more than infraction of his law. It is equally an error to identify sin with man's fleshly nature and define it as sensuality. Here clearly is a sphere of sin. Here selfishness takes the form of self-indulgence.

In sexual sin it means the degradation of others as well as disloyalty to man's higher nature and calling. But it is because man is more than flesh that he sins in the flesh, as lesser creatures do not. The appeal is made to Paul, who was probably influenced at this point by the Hellenistic dualism of body and spirit. But Paul is not a dualist. He does not identify sin with the flesh, and he includes among "the works of the flesh" such sins as enmity, strife, jealousy, anger and selfishness (Gal. 5:20).

Of late, neo-orthodox writers like Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr have revived the Augustinian-Calvinistic definition of sin as pride, or viewed pride as the basic sin. Barth's most frequent reference is to the tempter's words in Gen. 3:5: "Ye shall be as God" (or "as gods"). Pride is man seeking to exalt himself to the place of God instead of humbly recognizing his creaturely status. Niebuhr says, "Man falls into pride, when he seeks to raise his contingent existence to unconditioned significance." [3] The sinfulness of pride is obvious. It is another matter to make it the basic sin and the root of all sin. One need only look at the world about him today and at the sins which curse men: the lack of faith, the want of love, the spirit of greed and lust and hate, the love of things, the desire for wealth and pleasure and power over others, above all the indifference to the needs of men and the demand of God. There is not much in all this of the effort to escape "contingent existence" and reach "unconditioned significance." Nor are drunkard and glutton and libertine marked by the spirit of pride. It is interesting to note the sins to which Jesus refers in the Sermon on the Mount: hate of brother, lascivious desire, the lack of true and simple speech, the want of love, unreality and display in religion, divided loyalty, anxiety, the spirit of criticism and judgment, the want of trust and of a plain and single obedience. These are the sins which we see today.

Once more we must recall that the concept of sin depends upon

[3] Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, pp. 20, 145, 146; Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, I, 18ff.

the concept of God and of that which is good in God's sight. Where a one-sided stress is put upon the divine sovereignty and transcendence, there the emphasis, as with Barth, will be on the creaturehood of man and the sin of pride which exalts itself against God. Jesus knows the sovereignty and power of God. Men are to fear him "who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). He stresses humility; his way is that of lowliness of heart. But the humility is to be joined with rejoicing in the God who reveals himself to babes. And when he speaks of fear, it is in order that in the fear of God men may be set free from all other fears, and that they may rejoice in a God whose love and power, extending to the sparrow, is even more concerned with man who is "of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:31). So we come again to the infinite love which wields this power and to the final test: to trust this God, to obey him in reverence and awe, to live as children in the Father's spirit of love.

Social Sin

Only slowly has mankind achieved the idea of the significance of the individual person as a free, rational, responsible being, a person with inherent rights as such. In religion it came through the prophets and Jesus; one of its fruits in our social life is the democratic faith and way. The mark of primitive life was solidarity, the dominance of the individual by family or clan or tribe. Christianity did not eliminate the idea of the group life; rather it lifted it to a higher level. It reconciled the interests of individual and group: the individual gave himself in devoted loyalty and service; the group enabled the individual to realize his fullest life. Not only the Church but every form of human fellowship has significance for the Christian faith. Home, community, industry, state, all are spheres in which God's will is to be done, in which God and man are served. All are to be expressions of the personal and ethical and not merely impersonal institutions. They are neither the enemy's territory nor a religious no man's land. And

these, as well as the individual soul, are a place of God's presence and redemptive action.

With this comes the idea of group sin, or social sin. We are not losing here the concept of sin as involving knowledge and freedom and responsibility. There is no group apart from the individuals which compose it, though the group life has a meaning and a wealth which is more than what comes by a mere addition of individuals. We have then two forms of human life and action, that of the individual and of the group. In both cases we have moral responsibility and sin.

It has been said that "only individuals are moral agents." [4] But there is no part of our life into which group action does not enter. We are constantly thinking and planning and acting together. Sometimes the association is intimate and the share of the individual very clear, as in the home or in a business partnership. Sometimes the individual's share, and so his responsibility, seems very slight. In the larger group actions, as in industry and the state, only the few seem to be implicated. Yet here, too, there is a growing conscience, most of all in the Western democracies. Modern democracy insists increasingly not only on the rights of the individual but upon his obligations. And not even under dictatorship can the rank and file of the people be excused from all responsibility for evil action and tragic consequence. Indifference, apathy, the failure to study and think and act, even at cost of danger, this too is a sin. And this failure is the greatest danger in a democracy. Our associated life, in industry and state and in other fields, tends to become increasingly impersonal, with its decisions ever further removed from the group. Yet the whole thesis of democracy is that such participation is possible, and that government should be not only of and for the people, but by the people.

What we have then is both individual and group action, and that means both individual and group responsibility and sin. We

[4] Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, I, 208.

act together, thinking, planning, deciding; and so there is group responsibility and group sin. But we have entered into this as individuals; it is our decision, our merit or blame. What is needed here is to realize that man as man is both individual and social; he cannot be an individual except in social relations, nor can there be any society apart from individuals. And so there are sins which we commit together, group sins; and in this group conduct individuals share responsibility. Thus we create, or consent to, an economic order which denies men equal opportunity, which brings about extremes of wealth and poverty, alike morally harmful. We have watched whole nations developing an ultranationalism with its sins of pride, racial prejudice, exploitation of backward peoples, a selfish isolationism, and militarism. The weaknesses of men have been exploited for profit in the sale of alcoholic drinks and habit-forming drugs, in gambling and prostitution. There are group sins of the spirit, which may characterize a nation, a class, or a community; prejudices of race and religion are commonly the sins of a social group, from which the individual takes them over. Materialism, secularism, the worship of pleasure and material possessions and power, these form a social atmosphere with potent influence on individual life. In turn, the individual, by passive acceptance or active participation, furthers the group sin and shares in the blame.

The extraordinary development of associated life in the modern world, due to modern science, technical advances, attendant mass industry, and world trade, has tended to depersonalize great areas of human life and so to demoralize it. The common man seems to have little share in all this corporate life of industry and government, and he feels little responsibility. Hence the sense of group sin is wanting. Yet there remains the fact that our responsibility and culpability reach beyond individual action; the individual life is never merely individual. And the urgent task in the social field is to resist this movement which rules out alike morality and religion from man's group life; to fight against an absolutist control

from above, whether political or industrial; and, while democratizing the social order, to enforce upon the common man the moral responsibility which democracy brings him. And with this there should go a new appreciation of each one's share of guilt in the great group sins of our day.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ORIGIN AND PROPAGATION OF SIN

THE PRIMARY CONCERN OF CHRISTIANITY IS NOT THE ORIGIN OF SIN BUT THE QUESTION OF WHAT SIN IS AND HOW IT may be overcome. Neither the prophets nor Jesus deal with the former matter. The only reference in the Old Testament is that in Gen. 3, unless one considers the curious story of the "sons of God" and the daughters of men in Gen. 6, a bit of mythology which theologians have usually passed over. Paul has only two references to the fall. His interest, too, is not in a theory of origins, but in the thought of Christ as the center of history, the vanquisher of sin and death, the giver of life, the beginner of a new race. Traditional theology, on the other hand, especially of the Augustinian-Calvinistic line, went to these early stories as a primary source, finding here its doctrines of man and sin, of primal perfection and total depravity.

What is the value of this account for Christian thought? In rejecting its unhistorical and dogmatic misuse it is easy to miss its meaning as an expression of faith. It is not science or history, and modern science does not nullify its value. It is not inspired theology. It is a declaration of faith. It uses picture or symbol, a form which belongs to the highest expressions of human thought as found in poetry and religion. Some have called the Genesis story of creation and fall a myth, a valid term if it be taken to mean not the want of truth but simply the form of its presentation. Here are truths that will abide while scientific theories change.

To the picture form belong the thought of creation in six days and in a specified order, the idea of a central earth, a domelike structure above in which the heavenly bodies are fixed, the story of God walking in a garden looking for a man in hiding. The great truths which enter into this hymn of faith are plain. Basic is the faith in the one God who is before all and over all, the creator God who shaped heaven and earth in power and order and beauty and with gracious purpose. Man appears as the crown of creation, as the creature made in the likeness of God, who can hear God and make answer to him, who is set here to rule, who can choose and can disobey. The purpose of the temptation story is not so clear, and scholars are still in dispute about it. Some would say that its primary concern was to show how man became a mortal creature, subject to death. Others would extend this and find here an early theodicy: the evil of this world, toil, pain of childbirth, suffering, sin, death, all have come from one source, man's disobedience, for which these are God's punishment. The idea of total depravity and an inherited corruption for all the race is not contained here; we are told neither just what is meant by the image of God in man nor what is meant by its loss. It is plain, however, that we have here a lofty moral faith: a good God, sin as man's free and responsible choice, evil as the result of man's wrongdoing.

The Origin of Sin

To describe historically just when and where and how sin came into the world is neither possible nor important. It is inevitable, however, that faith should ask how evil should appear in a world created by a good God. We are not left without light on this question. Much of our difficulty arises from our thinking of the world and man in static fashion, and from supposing that because God is perfect goodness and all power, therefore creation means a world coming from his hand at one stroke complete and perfect. If we hold this, then we shall have to say that "sin proceeds from

a wholly inexplicable act of will in opposition to God." [1] Such a conception, however, is not required by the Christian faith and has no support in scientific or historical knowledge. It is our faith that a good God created this world and that it is dependent upon him, but God's way of work in creation is another matter. The great question is not how evil came into a perfect world but how God has worked to create, in a world which Genesis itself speaks of as once "without form and void," such beauty and order, such life and reason and intelligence and love, as this world shows even in the midst of evil.

The question belongs to a larger discussion, that of the problem of evil. Here it is enough to say: from what we know of the past and of God's working today, his way for his world is that of growth, of struggle and striving, and of an increasing element of freedom in his creatures, becoming rational and moral freedom in man. We cannot say when, in the movement of this growing life, man became truly man, "when the first man stood God-conquered, with his face to heaven upturned." We cannot, indeed, tell in the case of the individual at just what point the life whose growth begins in the darkness of the womb becomes a living soul. We do know, however, that at the beginning, as today, certain forces or factors were present in man which contained the possibilities of good and evil. There was, of course, the conditioning environment, physical and social. Our present concern, however, is with the elements in man himself.

1. There is a necessary self-asserting aspect in all life, and man shares this. There are hungers of every kind that ask for satisfaction. There is the desire for self-preservation and, beyond that, for achievement. This is the will to live. It is not of itself evil nor does religion demand its elimination. That demand comes only with an extreme quietism or asceticism, or an extreme mysticism whose goal is the loss of self and absorption in the divine. Christianity appeals, rather, to this will to live. It comes with the offer of life, life that is rich and full and satisfying.

[1] Karl Heim, *Leitfaden der Dogmatik*, p. 47.

Yet here, in this sense of self and this drive of its needs, there is a place of test and temptation. To this creature of impulse and desire there has been given the vision of that which is higher—God and right and the claim of others upon his interest and effort. So there comes the need of choice and the temptation to set self against God, to put self before others, to follow the lower instead of the higher. This remains the great temptation and source of evil today. Call it egocentricity, self-centeredness, selfishness: it is man against God in disobedience, man against his fellows in selfishness, and in putting the lower before the higher, it is man sinning against himself.

2. But there are other elements in man's nature beside this native self-concern. There is the other-regarding or social side. Man has never lived a merely individual or isolated life. His life is not complete or satisfying without others. This group life rests back on corresponding impulses and instincts. Man has a sensitive awareness of his fellows, especially those who are nearest to him. In the family this means sympathy, tenderness, protectiveness, affection. It is not without significance that the New Testament (Jesus first of all) uses the symbolism of the family to set forth what God is and what man's life should be. In the larger groupings there have developed such sentiments or attitudes as friendship, loyalty, the sense of solidarity, and co-operation. Man says "we" as well as "I."

Here, too, there is the temptation to evil and the occasion for sin. The group life can become a selfish life. Toward those outside there can easily be suspicion, fear, and hatred. Today we have the strife of class with class, of nation with nation, the exploitation of the weaker by the more powerful, the inability to envisage a common good and the unwillingness to work for it. In the group life, as in the life of the individual, there is occasion for temptation as well as opportunity to achieve good.

3. In similar manner man's capacity for self-transcendence is at once the way to the good life and an occasion for temptation.

Such self-transcendence is made possible by the appeal of a higher world and man's capacity to respond. That appeal comes in three ways: in man's awareness of higher values and a desire to attain them; in his sense of obligation in relation to these; in his awareness of God and of his need of God. Here is the crucial point in the entrance of sin: man, discerning the higher and its claim upon him, can obey or can refuse.

All three of these aspects of man's nature, his sense of self, of others, and of God, are at once the door to life and the possible occasion of sin and death. At each of these points, including self and fellow man, it is God who comes to man and God whom man rejects. At each point sin appears as the self setting itself against God.

Various theories of the origin of evil can be ruled out. (1) Sin does not belong to man because he is a mere creature, finite and imperfect. (2) Its explanation is not in any dualistic theory which holds that the fleshly and material as such are evil, or which posits a devil and evil spirits in eternal opposition to the good God. (3) It is not explained by the theory of evolution, positing a struggle between man's nature as spirit, with its vision of right and good, and the brute nature with its inherited instincts and passions coming from the long ages of slowly evolving animal life. Tennyson's phrase of "Nature, red in tooth and claw," his summons to "let the ape and tiger die," are as far from the truth as is Thomas H. Huxley's word about the "gladiator show." Prince Kropotkin and Henry Drummond insisted rightly upon the significance of the group life and the struggle for others as one aspect of evolution, and a later work emphasizes the "survival of the truly fittest through love and sacrifice, sociability and cooperation," [2] elements especially marked when at length the mammal arrives.

Over against these theories we must say: our real problem is not the origin of evil but the creation of the good. It is no minimizing of sin, of its evil nature and its serious consequences, to

[2] Geddes and Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

say that it can be understood only in the light of the larger issue. In Christian thought the good, the supreme good, is personal and ethical and religious. It is man's free choice of the right and good and his devotion to a good and righteous God. It involves not merely act but inner spirit and achieved character. Its attainment and full expression is possible only in social relations. Like all life it is under the law of growth: growth in knowledge, in wisdom, in devotion, in character. But it has its own special principle, that of moral freedom. Such a life can never be an outright gift, bestowed by some initial creative act. What God gives man is the possibility of achievement. This lies not only in the nature of the world and man as God has created them, but in the truth and grace and help which God offers and which man may accept or reject.

Under these conditions sin is neither an inscrutable mystery nor a necessity. Historically viewed, indeed, it appears to us as an inevitability. Ignorance grows slowly into knowledge, weakness into strength. The lower nature must be made obedient to the higher vision. The way is not one of "natural" growth or mere self-expression but of determined choice between conflicting interests and impulses, with toil and struggle. Progress comes with growing discernment, but every new vision brings a crisis. Man is given not merely strength but power. It may be true, as Lord Acton has said, that "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." But possession of power, power to rule and not just strength, is of the very essence of human nature, this "main miracle, that thou art thou, with power on thine own self and on the world." This is man's God-given ability to rule himself, to control nature, yes, and to rule others. But here again that which belongs to the highest good may easily become evil; power over nature may be for mere self-indulgence and power over others a cruel and selfish domination motivated by pride and greed.[3]

[3] "Every human being is a problem in search of a solution," writes W. F. Ashley-Montagu in *On Being Human* (New York: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1950), p. 12, a comment which applies to the race as to the individual.

In all this there remains the vital truth expressed by the doctrine of the fall and its consequences for man. (1) If there is to be on earth a race of beings who shall know God and live with him and share in his spirit of love and righteousness, then they must have that freedom and responsibility which go with knowing and choosing. (2) Man has misused that freedom by refusing God and his way. That refusal is dramatized in the Genesis story, which sets forth not merely what happened at the beginning of human life but what has been repeated by man in every generation. (3) The choice of sin brings its consequences, as does the choice of good. The evil results appear in the bent of life, the power which evil gains over us, the lessened vision and desire for God and good, as well as in the larger social-historical consequences. The Genesis story only asserts what is plain to everyone who looks upon man and his history.

The Propagation of Sin

The universality of sin and the propagation of sin were explained in traditional theology by the doctrine of original sin and total depravity. Adam's deed brought the instant and total corruption of his own nature, and this evil nature was passed on to the race and all its members. Calvin presents this in throughgoing and consistent fashion. Original sin is "a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all parts of the soul." "No part remains exempt from sin, and, therefore, everything which proceeds from him is imputed as sin." Thus "infants have the seed implanted in them. Nay, their whole nature is, as it were, a seedbed of sin, and therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God." [4] Sin then comes, in Calvin's phrase, by "carnal descent."

To this it must be replied that sin, like goodness, is not a physical or metaphysical matter. It is found in the realm of the personal-ethical. It cannot, therefore, be passed on by a biological process

[4] *The Institutes of the Christian Religion,* Bk. II, ch. I, secs. 7-9.

any more than goodness can. Sin is propagated in the race in the same manner as in the individual. The three important aspects of this propagation are the individual, the hereditary, and the historical-social.

1. Sin is always man's individual and responsible choice. If it is less than this, then it is not sin. In this sense "each man is his own Adam." That is why, alike in Old Testament and New, men are summoned to choose, to decide. However limited and conditioned this moral freedom may be, we should not be human without it. In every man, in every generation, there is a choosing and deciding. It is not by spiritual inertia, nor by the play on man of irresistible forces, but by this continuing choice and affirmation that sin lives and grows from age to age. And it grows in the individual. Sin is organic, not atomistic. It grows with sinning, propagating itself, increasing its power, making the whole life more and more sinful.

2. There is what we may call the hereditary aspect. Man is not born "good," for moral goodness is an achievement. Nor does he come into the world as a passive or neutral being. Though he is at birth neither (morally) good nor bad, there are powerful forces native to him. This is the instinct-impulse side of his nature as already considered. Moral freedom is seen in the direction which he gives his life, but it works in and through these drives, and these may move him powerfully toward evil. Here is the element of truth in Augustinianism. But there are other drives which move toward the good. There is an awareness of God and good and a desire for them. And man can hear and respond when God speaks.

3. Human life is never merely individual. Good and evil alike live and grow in man's social, or group, life. The evil social life is not merely one of wrong practices. There are wrong attitudes, all too evident in the world's life today: suspicion, fear, jealousy, selfishness, ill will. There is a historical heritage of false ideas and wrong ideals, an evil institutional heritage found in state and industry and social practices. All this evil tends to propagate itself.

Men are born into this world of evil, breathe its spirit, are shaped by its ideas. It is idle to ask whether this historical-social heritage is more powerful or less than the psychological-biological. The two form a whole in powerful interaction.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN: GUILT AND PUNISHMENT

The Consequences of Sin

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE INCLUSIVE WORD FOR THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN IS DEATH. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MEN IS LIFE, life at its fullest and highest. Sin is the refusal of life and of the ways that lead to life; so death is the fruit of sin. That does not mean merely physical death, as might seem from Paul's reference to Adam's sin and the entrance of death into the world in Rom. 5:12. There is a deeper meaning when Paul, having referred to the law of sin in his members, cries for deliverance "from this body of death." So we read of sin, "which leads to death," that "the end of those things in death," that "to set the mind on the flesh is death," just as "to set the mind on the Spirit is life" (Rom. 7:24; 6:16, 21; 8:6). Sin works death; indeed, it is death. "He who does not love remains in death" (Rom. 7:13; 1 John 3:14). The death of the higher is the consequence of sin, and sin itself is a kind of death.

In all this there is nothing arbitrary; death is no mere imposition of punishment. Sin by its very nature brings death. It refuses God and so separates man from the source of all life. It rejects the law of love and sets a man at variance with his fellows. So life becomes narrow, poor, loveless, lonely; and there enter in suspicion, fear, jealousy, bitterness, hatred. In refusing God man remains divided within, for unity can come to man only as he finds that highest

Will of good and right, in obedience to which he gains freedom and harmony and peace.

Here, as elsewhere, theology has tended to be content with generalities and to move within too narrow limits. We need to look at the consequence of sin concretely and in the full range of man's life. The destructive results of sin may be seen in the total psychophysical life. Sin is man's departure from the way of life, the way to health and well-being of body and spirit. Such sins as lust, drunkenness, and gluttony plainly affect spirit and body alike. Conversely, a man's inner life profoundly affects his physical well-being. Modern psychology has made plain the many ills of body as well as spirit which follow from wrong inner attitudes and social maladjustments. Some of the most terrible consequences of the sins against the body are passed on to others, especially through alcoholism and sexual vice, including blindness, epilepsy, and feeble-mindedness. But the life of sin brings its most serious results in the spiritual realm: the lessened desire for God and good, the blunting of the moral sense, the dulling of spiritual vision, lessening of moral power, growing fixation of habit and character and so loss of freedom, with a general disintegration and ultimate destruction of the higher self.

The full consequences of sin are seen only as we look beyond the individual. The sin of the individual affects those about him. For good or ill, every man's life affects his neighbor. His deeds help to shape their world. His spirit helps to create the atmosphere in which they live. And his sin, with that of community and nation, lives on in ideas and institutions which help to form social environment and are handed down in history. Nor are the evil effects less real or far-reaching if, as is common with the masses, the sin is negative, a slothful and selfish indifference and the failure of that positive goodness which loves righteousness and hates iniquity.

Turning to the associated life of men, a study of the mass evils of the race makes increasingly clear that the great scourges of poverty, disease, and war are ultimately a consequence of sin. The destruction of forests, the depletion of soil, wealth in one land or one class and starvation in another, debasing drudgery and de-

moralizing idleness are the fruits of sin, of selfishness and greed and indifference. In turn poverty and wretchedness, as the modern age has shown, furnish the opportunity to dictators and the occasion for revolutions and wars. We have the resources and skill to produce enough for all; we have lacked the vision, the unselfishness, the co-operation needed alike for adequate production and right distribution. And this last lack has prevented the elimination of typhoid, tuberculosis, and other plagues which science has conquered in principle and whose needed preventive treatment is known.

The most terrible consequence of sin is sin itself. The casual sin becomes the habit and character of the man. Men receive what they desire. They make self the center, and selfishness, with its isolation and emptiness and loneliness, becomes their lot. They refuse God, and theirs is a life without high purpose or hope, without strength and joy and peace. They choose darkness rather than light, and the light that is in them becomes darkness. In the conflict within they let the lower self have its way until at last there is no other. (So in the classic portrayal of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, by Robert Louis Stevenson.) Nations live in selfish indifference to others, careful only of their own interests, cultivating a narrow loyalty, relying upon intrigue and force of arms. So they receive what they have chosen, a world of suspicion and fear and hate, ending in mutually destructive warfare.

Guilt

Guilt is usually thought of as involving three elements: the fact of wrongdoing, responsibility for the deed and thus blameworthiness, and liability to punishment. This is the ethical-personal conception. It stems from the prophets and rests back upon a personal-ethical conception of religion and in turn upon our thought of God. If we conceive of religion in personal-ethical terms, then we shall think of sin and guilt in similar manner. Guilt will not simply mean, this man has done what is wrong and therefore should be punished; but rather, this man knew right and chose wrong and is blameworthy.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN: GUILT AND PUNISHMENT

Guilt, like sin, attaches to the spirit and attitude of a man, to his character and total course of life, not simply to some single deed or failure. Sometimes persistence in evil choice and refusal of light so darken the mind that evil is done with little realization that it is evil. Yet, responsible for his total life, this man is sinful and guilty. Guilt, like sin, may be social as well as individual; but here too it remains personal and ethical. This does not exclude wide variance in the degree of guilt, both individual and social (Luke 12:47, 48; 20:47). In a democracy the group responsibility, and so the group guilt, is greater than it is in a nation where policy and action are determined by the few. Yet there is no land where the rank and file are wholly without knowledge and power. That is why even Fascist and communist leaders have felt impelled to indoctrinate their people and to gain a popular support. God alone can determine the degree of guilt with individuals or a people, but the fact remains (Rom. 2:12-16). The child is born into a world of evil. Ideals, accepted practices, and daily example create the atmosphere that he breathes. But that does not eliminate the fact of individual sin and guilt, for as the child grows, there enters in the awareness of right and wrong and so personal responsibility.

This position differs from that of the traditional theology which follows the Augustinian-Calvinistic succession. We all recognize the fact of a world that is sinful in spirit and practice, and of a human nature of whose impulses and passions one can say either that they are sinful or that they issue in sin if not controlled or transformed. The difference lies in the interpretation. Augustine declared that this was explained by the fact that in Adam's fall not only his own nature but that of the whole race was corrupted. Hence, as Calvin insisted, man could do nothing but sin; and sin meant guilt. Adam's sin was our sin. This was Augustine's effort to justify God in holding all men guilty: Adam's sin was his free deed, and we are equally guilty with him because, present in him, we shared in this act. This conception of the whole race as present and active in Adam is a piece of speculative metaphysics. Calvin's thinking, too, is metaphysical, rather than personal-ethical, when he speaks of the *nature* of the newborn babe as "odious and abomi-

nable to God," and of these infants as "properly deemed sinful" and thus as under condemnation and guilty.[1] Back of this is the concept of God which puts absolute sovereignty above the ethical, positing a God who willed that Adam should fall and thus, as a necessary consequence, willed the sin and guilt of all mankind and the damnation of all except those whom his sovereign will selected for salvation.

The Punishment of Sin

By divine punishment we mean those results which according to God's purpose follow upon human wrongdoing and are borne by the sinner. There are those who would repudiate such a conception; they cannot think of a good God imposing suffering upon his creatures. The protest involves a twofold error. One is the idea that punishment is something arbitrarily determined and externally imposed. Rather, the punishment of sin is to be found in those evil consequences, already considered, which follow necessarily upon wrongdoing. The other error lies in failing to see that punishment, rightly conceived, is implied in the very idea of a good God, a God who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, whose face is set against evil just because he loves men.

What is asserted here is not the idea of a jealous and vindictive God but that of a morally ordered universe. The question is whether this universe, morally considered, is one of order or of anarchy. Indeed, it would mean the final destruction of human hope if good and evil fared alike, if it were not true that "whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Such an order is not impersonal. It does not operate mechanically. It is nothing less than God in action, the God of truth and righteousness, of love and judgment.

While punishment is found in the proper consequence of evil, not all such consequences are to be viewed as punishment. There is innocent suffering due to the wrongdoing of others, and there is a vicarious suffering in which men bear the sins of others, Jesus being the supreme example. In neither of these cases is the term

[1] *Op. cit.*, Bk. II, ch. I.

punishment rightly employed, for punishment has no place where there is no personal guilt.

Here might well be considered the many Old Testament references to the wrath or anger or indignation of God. Some of the passages are strongly anthropopathic: God roars from Zion, his anger burns, he is full of wrath, he takes vengeance on his adversaries. Some of these expressions represent the more primitive level in the Old Testament. Yet there is something here that belongs to the prophetic teaching. God's judgment on evil is no mere impersonal process in which a divine regent, aloof, unmoved, apportions punishment or award. There is an attitude of feeling as well as of mind and will, though such human terms as anger and indignation but poorly express it.

We see this more clearly when we look at the converse, at God's attitude of justice and mercy, of love and righteousness. God's righteousness is positive, creative, devoted, one may even say passionate. So is his love; it has in it an unselfish devotion, a deep concern, a sorrow, a pity. The word applied to Jesus belongs here: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (Heb. 1:9). Here again Jesus is the revelation of God. We read of the anger of Jesus (Mark 3:5), of his indignation at the disciples who sought to keep the little children from him (Mark 10:14). We note his burning words spoken against those leaders who "shut the kingdom of heaven against men," while they themselves refuse to enter (Matt. 23:13). What stirred Jesus in these cases was the sin against men, the sin against love. It was in the name of love that he was angry with those who sought to block the coming of the kingdom of love and righteousness and to keep from men the gifts of the kingdom.

As regards the Old Testament it should be noted, first, that in the prophetic teaching anger and judgment have an ethical meaning; they indicate the divine attitude toward evil. Second, wrath and judgment are always related to mercy as part of God's action in establishing a rule of righteousness and love on earth. Sometimes words of judgment and mercy stand side by side (Isa. 54:7-10; 55:6-9; Pss. 103:8-13; 145:8; Jer. 29:11-19).

There are few references to God's wrath in the New Testament. They occur mostly in the book of Revelation, which shares this emphasis on wrath and judgment with the Jewish apocalypticism of that day to which it is so closely related. Significantly the term is not found on the lips of Jesus. In one passage Paul refers to the final judgment as "the day of wrath." Religion necessarily uses language taken from human life and relations, but Christian theology can find better terms than "wrath" for God's attitude and than "day of wrath" to describe his judgment.

The Purposes of Punishment

In human society the purpose of punishment has varied greatly in theory and practice. In earlier stages it was often vindictive. Again it took the form of compensation to the injured party or his group. The idea of retribution has been widespread and persistent, the state being viewed as entrusted by God with this function. The modern tendency is to stress the protection of society and the prevention of crime. Increasingly, however, society is coming to recognize a duty to the offender also; and so it plans for his training and rehabilitation. It realizes, on the one hand, that the vindictive or purely penal attitude shuts the door to the offender's conscience, embitters him, and confirms him in his evil, while penal institutions may even serve as schools of crime. At the same time it recognizes that wrongdoing is rarely, if ever, purely individual. Society shares in responsibility directly or through remissness in home, community, school, economic condition, and other relations. So there is increasing recognition of the fact that the removal of causes of wrongdoing must go hand in hand with its punishment.

Religious thought has reflected these forms of social theory. Thus punishment has been conceived as retributive, or even as vindictive, with God demanding satisfaction for his violated honor. For those who believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the ultimate purpose of punishment will be seen as disciplinary and redemptive. Back of it is not only righteousness but

love and hope.[2] So it is with God. Sin in its beginning is not a matter of deliberation with full awareness of its meaning. Rather it is at first tentative, almost casual. It may be simply an easy acquiescence in the standards and practices of the social environment, with little appreciation of the evil of sin and its meaning in relation to God. Punishment helps to bring that meaning home and so to lead to repentance.

But discipline is not its only meaning. Punishment is not mere medicine for the ill or training for the immature, ceasing when it proves ineffective. The difference between right and wrong is an eternal one—in its nature and in its consequences. Sin is no mere deed of a moment; it is a basically wrong life attitude. Its consequences are inevitable, and they remain as long as that attitude persists. If discipline is to accomplish the end of making the sinner realize his sin and its meaning, it can only be as the sinner sees the eternal opposition of right and wrong, the meaning of his evil life in the light of a holy God and his high purpose, and the rightness of God's judgment upon him. Without this realization God's forgiveness and man's salvation are not possible. Nor have we ground for social hope except as we can believe in an inescapable moral order with its inevitable judgment upon evil. The ancient Latin word was, "Let justice be done though the heavens fall." What we need to realize is that unless justice is done, the heavens *will* fall. So the retributive element remains in punishment as part of an order which is at once moral and redemptive.

[2] "Punishment . . . is an expression of social hope—the hope of remaking or saving the man, by revealing to him in the language of deeds the meaning of his own deed." W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, p. 258.

PART THREE

SALVATION

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MEANING OF SALVATION

SALVATION IS THE FOCAL POINT OF RELIGION. HARNACK HAS REFERRED TO THE TWO ASPECTS OF RELIGION AS *die ruhende und die bewegende Elemente*. There is the side of rest, of trust and hope and help; there is the side of action or obligation, conceived in a high ethical sense or in terms of prescribed ritual, ceremonial, sacrifice, and offerings. The vital concern of men, present in higher or lower form in every religion, is the side of saving help, or salvation.

The Place of Salvation in Religion

Religion roots in the conviction that there is a world of higher meaning and value and power, and that man may have life through right relation to this world. It is the faith, in the words of William James, that "the believer is continuous with a wider self from which saving experiences flow in." [1] On its highest level religion is always ethics and salvation in closest union, gift as well as demand, dynamic joined to ideal. It says with Augustine, "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt."

The dominant note of the New Testament is salvation. Jesus proclaimed the gospel, the good news of the saving purpose of God. That name, given to its first four books, might rightly be the title of the New Testament as a whole. Its theme is the good news of God's coming in Christ for the salvation of men, of the kingdom of God upon earth and the kingdom in heaven. The Church saw as its first task the proclamation of this word of salvation.

[1] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 307.

The idea of salvation has not had adequate attention in the modern Church. (1) The emphasis has been on the ethical in religion: in the individual life the stress on service, in church life on organization and activity. In the past the ethical element in Christianity has often suffered from neglect through one-sided mysticism, a subjective and individualistic pietism, a magical sacramentarianism, or a stress on divine absolutism which reduced man to a passive spectator of the divine deed. It was highly necessary that the ethical element should be recovered and that it should receive a new emphasis, especially in the field of social life. But too often the new emphasis meant a loss of the other aspect. Religion tended to become humanistic and moralistic, to lose the message of man's sin and need, of God's saving purpose and power. (2) The traditional statements of the doctrine of salvation were inadequate and unconvincing and the Church failed to give its message the needed reinterpretation.

Even more important has been the change in the environment of thought and life within which the Church works today. The story of this development begins with the Renaissance and the Reformation and the new freedom which came to man, freedom of thought as against the old authoritarianism and freedom of life as found in the growing democracy of the West. It includes the progress of science, invention, industry, and trade. Our concern here is neither with the advantages which this has brought to man nor with the accompanying social evils of which we are so keenly aware today, but with the way in which the changed atmosphere has affected the appeal of the idea of salvation.

Salvation means help from a higher power, and the first effect of this development was to increase man's confidence in himself and to lessen his sense of need. Once man stood in fear of nature and its incalculable forces, and even more of the world of evil spirits; so he sought supernatural aid. Science revealed to modern man a world of order; invention and engineering put into his hands the means of control. With these instruments he could now conquer disease and want and make nature his servant. Science

was the new messiah, and man was his own savior.[2] Of course this optimistic humanism recognized problems on the human side: man's ignorance, his mistaken ideas, social customs and institutions which needed change. But these could be cared for by education and reform. Man was a rational being and was essentially good; he himself could work the change. In such a world there was room for the ethical ideals of Christianity and for belief in God, but not much place for the idea of a sinful human nature that needed to be changed and of a God who could work in man both to will and to do.

More serious still was the increasing trend to naturalism and secularism. If humanism had no need of God, naturalism left no place for God. There could be no thought of saving help if there were only natural forces under immutable laws. Even when the naturalism was of the idealistic or humanistic type, there could be at most the thought of a beneficent process or a value-supporting order. There was wholly absent the Christian idea of a personal God, forgiving, reconciling, creating new men, and by his indwelling Spirit of truth and love and righteousness creating a new world.

Secularism is naturalism expressed in a philosophy of life and values. It is ancient, but the modern age, with its opportunities for money getting and its multiplied material means of satisfaction, has given secularism a new impetus. Men look on wealth as the test of success, the highest instrument of power, and as commanding all the means of self-gratification. "Soul, you have ample goods. . . . ; eat, drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19). Modern nationalism, with its desire for territory and trade and its reliance upon arms,

[2] In a passage in *The Golden Day* Lewis Mumford refers to Mark Twain's naïve worship of the "paleotechnic age," and quotes from a letter of his written to Walt Whitman in connection with the celebration of the latter's seventieth birthday. "You have lived just the seventy years which are greatest in the world's history. . . . What great births you have witnessed! The steam press, the steamship, the steel ship, the railroad. . . . But tarry for a while, for the greatest is yet to come. Wait thirty years and then look out over the earth! You shall see marvels upon marvels: . . . and their formidable result—man at almost his full stature at last." That was in 1889. Thirty years later the first world war had just closed and the victors had learned so little that they were even then shaping the events which led to the even more terrible second world war.

is another expression of this secularism. Communist and capitalist countries alike show this.

This is the world to which the Church has to present its gospel of the God who saves, with its wholly different view as to the highest goods of life, the needs of man, and the way of help.

But there is another aspect to the modern situation. When all weight is given to the conditions indicated above, certain other facts remain, and this first: the deep needs of man are still here, needs unsatisfied by the gods of the machine and wealth and power. The hunger for God, the sense of guilt, the need of healing and wholeness within, the need of inner power alike to rule ourselves and to meet the world, the desire for oneness with our fellows and for mutual understanding and help, the search for meaning and purpose in the world's life and our own, a faith that will give us confidence as we face the world's future and hope as we think of our own—these eternal needs still cry for satisfaction. Indeed, there is good reason for saying that they are being felt more keenly today than for many years. Men have turned to the most diverse agencies. There is the remarkable growth of psychiatry and its use by social agencies. There is a strong and continued development of cults which have, with very wide differences, this thing in common: they offer a message of salvation, or satisfaction of need, through higher powers. Some are healing cults. Some emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit, often conceived as an ecstatic experience. There are movements on the religious border line like spiritualism, astrology, and numerology, and bizarre religious movements like those of Father Divine and "The Great I Am." They offer variously peace of mind, health of body, material prosperity. But all this points to the same conclusion: men are conscious of personal need and are seeking help.

The social scene points the same way. There is the fear of war in all its forms: economic warfare, the cold war between nations, the threat of danger from what will soon be the common possession of incalculably powerful instruments of destruction, the possibility, to some the certainty, that another war will destroy all that the race has achieved through the centuries. Here, too, the

comfortable optimism of a generation ago is gone and men are asking as to a way of salvation. For some it is the way of nationalism, resting on wealth and military might. Others look to a form of international organization. Still other lands show a blind trust in armed autocracies and total devotion to their leaders.

For the Christian Church the conclusion of all this should be plain. Mankind is still in need of help, though its searchings are often blind and vain. The first task of the Christian Church is still to proclaim a gospel. The most pressing task of Christian theology is to make clear the meaning and scope of the Christian doctrine of salvation as it bears on man's total life.

The Meaning of Salvation

The basic questions as to the meaning of salvation may be put in three simple phrases: from what, to what, by what.

1. Historically speaking, man's first concern in salvation was with the perils from which he sought to be saved. Life was full of dangers: want and disease, foes and wild beasts, evil spirits, the gods whom he had angered by dereliction or transgression, often unwittingly. The word "salvation" itself suggests deliverance. This aspect remains in the higher religions. The form of fear has altered; the ground for fear is still present. Man is dependent and limited. Natural evils remain, social evils have not decreased, and a spiritual religion serves to make plain to man the greatest evil, that within himself. Old Testament and New alike emphasize salvation as deliverance.

2. The dominant aspect of salvation in Christian thought is the positive one; it stresses not simply deliverance but that *to* which and *for* which man is saved. It is not an afterthought to remedy an unforeseen disaster which came with the entrance of sin and death into the world. It is rather the good purpose of God which is present in all his action in his world: in creation, revelation, providence, redemption. It all flows from the Christian conception of God, from our faith in a God of goodness and wisdom and power, whose love is seen in his sharing of life with his creatures and es-

pecially in that higher life of fellowship with himself which he gives to men.

Life is the key word for our understanding of salvation. Just as sin means death, so salvation means life. Christianity is the religion of life. It believes in the living God, not in an inscrutable power, not in a mere cosmic order, whether hard or beneficent, but in a God of purpose and action who brings his good will to pass. And life is the word which characterizes rightly the Christian way. It is life that God asks of man, no mere gift on the altar, or ritual of worship, or keeping of rules, but the whole life: thought and deed, deepest faith and highest affection, the whole field of man's desiring and doing. In turn it is life that God gives to man. What he asks, he bestows. This is salvation, God's gift of life: life at its fullest and highest, life of body and spirit, life individual and inner, life in its social aspects, the corporate life of man developing in history, life consummated in another world. Salvation is life. It cannot be less than this, and there is nothing greater. Men want deliverance from evil, but that of itself is not salvation. Men look for an eternal abode safe from change and decay and death, but salvation is more than a place.

> 'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
> Oh life, not death, for which we pant,
> More life, and fuller, that I want.

The desire for life has always been a driving force with man. At first it meant simply the demand for the satisfaction of physical wants, the need of fellowship, of safety. Christianity does not bid men give up the desire for life and for the satisfaction of its wants. Its word is not renounce, not *Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren.* Rather it says: "Why will you die?" (Ezek. 18:31). "Ho, every one who thirsts, come. . . . Hear, that your soul may live" (Isa. 55:1, 3). "I came that they may have life" (John 10:10). The task of religion is to show what life is, where its true needs lie, and how these may be satisfied.

The New Testament recognizes life as the good and goal of man

and as God's great gift in Christ. Jesus assumes and approves the desire of men for life; his concern is to point out the real meaning of life and the way of attainment (Luke 12:15-23; Matt. 7:14; 16:25). Paul and John, the great New Testament interpreters of salvation, make repeated use of the term "life"; and both of them refer to the life that is given here as well as in the world beyond. "The free gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. 6:23), says Paul. "You be made alive, when you were dead" (Eph. 2:1). They are to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), that is, to live out the life which has been given them. He speaks of "Christ who is our life" (Col. 3:4). This thought of salvation as life is even more pronounced in John. God gave his Son that those who believed in him should not perish but have eternal life. "In him was life" (John 1:4). Christ is "the bread of life" (John 6:35). And that life begins now; he who believes has "eternal life" (John 3:16), "has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). "He who has the Son has life" (I John 5:12).

3. The third question is that of the way: *By* what is man saved? The heart of the Christian answer is simple: God's deed in mercy, man's response in trust and devotion. "By grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). All life is from God; man receives life through fellowship with God. But as we explore this simple answer, we find how profound and how inclusive it is, how it enters into all the relations of life, transforming them and using them. The doctrine of salvation should make clear how God works in individual life, in the fellowships of life (especially the Church), in the movement of history, what his goal is in all these aspects of life, and what the means are which he employs.

Ways of Salvation

The world had not lacked in proffered ways of salvation before Christianity. Man has always had ways by which he has sought deliverance from evil and the goods of life. Chief among these have been (1) sacrifices and offerings by which to appease the anger of the gods or win their help; (2) on a lower level, the arts of magic

by which man thought to control spiritual powers and make them serve his ends; (3) the moralistic way, where man seeks to commend himself to God's favor by uprightness and good deeds in obedience to the divine will; (4) the way of gnosis, or knowledge of the truth, gained by philosophic insight, special illumination, or induction into secret mysteries once revealed (ignorance being here the great evil); (5) asceticism, winning salavation by fleeing the world and the flesh; (6) mysticism, seeking life by direct union with God, often through ecstatic experience.

Clearly, except for magic, which is, strictly speaking, not a religion, there are elements of truth in all these ways in which man has sought for help in a world higher than his own. The systems of offering and sacrifice symbolize the need of surrender and devotion. Gnosis indicates the place of insight. Asceticism suggests the need of self-discipline and the mastery of the spiritual over the physical. Legalism rests back on ideas of moral demand from a righteous God. Mysticism points the need of the union of man with God. But in the forms commonly taken each of these ways misses the larger truth and in so doing fails adequately to state its own.

When Paul and other Christians proclaimed the gospel, they found four rivals. Two of these played little part. One was the faith in the old national deities, whose names remained but whom the "acids of modernity," first century modernity, had already destroyed. The second was the philosophic cult, stemming from Greece, having its most active and significant form in stoicism. But though there was much that was noble in this, and though stoic missionaries carried it abroad, it belonged to the few, to great spirits like Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. It was an ethic, not a gospel; it had no promise of help for the common man. Neoplatonism was another philosophic faith. It combined the speculative, the religious, and the ethical. It influenced Judaism through Philo and had its effect later on in Christian theology. But it, too, was for the few; and it was not strictly a message of salvation.

It was different with the mystery cults. They were distinctly

religions of salvation. Here religion was at once individualized and social. The individual man was initiated into the mysteries and joined a group. There was an outward resemblance to the Christian movement in these societies, as also in their belief in a hero god who had died and entered into immortal life, with whom they sought a mystical union through sacrament and ecstatic experience so that they too might overcome death and have life immortal. But the differences were fundamental. Their gods were mythical; Jesus was a historical person. They had no message as to God; their hero god was a finite being. The Christian gospel proclaimed the eternal God who had come to men in Christ. The ethical was incidental, a qualification which candidates had to meet in order to gain admission, at least in some of the cults; for Christianity the ethical was basic alike in the salvation which it brought and in the demand which it made.

Judaism was the fourth way. It has shown at times a distinct missionary spirit. Its high ethic and lofty monotheism appealed to serious seekers in the Roman world. These proselytes, found in the synagogues of the Diaspora, were among the first to respond to Paul's preaching. What Christianity owed to it and where Christianity went beyond it must be considered later. In the end Judaism remained the religion of a particular people and predominantly a religion of law and ritual. It developed no clear message of personal salvation. Salvation remained for it a future and a national deliverance. It had no adequate gospel for that needy world.

Looking back with the perspective of the years, we can see what the world needed and what Christianity brought.

Its gospel was a message from God, God's word to men, not man's ideals and ideas. Its object of faith was not the hero gods of the mystery cults nor the deities of the old Greek and Roman pantheons, finite and fallible creatures of man's imagining. Its promise was that of the help of the infinite and eternal One, exalted above men yet drawing near in mercy. He was the living God, a God of action and not a mere cosmic order. He was a personal God with whom man might have fellowship and not a mere abstract principle or idea.

It brought Jesus Christ: not myth but history, not an imagined ideal but a concrete living personality, revealing in life and deed at once the true life of man and the spirit and purpose of God.

It came with a right understanding of man. It knew the disease for which it offered the remedy. It was equally removed from cynical pessimism and uncritical idealism. It saw man as a sinner in God's sight, but a sinner who might become a son of God.

Its message of salvation was inclusive. It was for all men, not for an elite of intellect or character but for the least and neediest and most sinful. It was for the whole man: it brought forgiveness and healing of spirit, high ideals and strength to obey, and personal fellowship with God. It included the associated life as well as the individual, the future as well as the present; it offered men a present fellowship of faith and love and service, the promise of a coming kingdom of God on earth, and the hope of the life beyond.

Education and Salvation

Education and salvation have often been set up in contrast with each other or even in opposition. Man needs regeneration, say some, not education. It is not enough to train man; he must be transformed. And that cannot be done by mere development of the capacities of man, for man is finite and evil, but only by a Power above man. On the other side we have not only the naturalistic humanist, who has no place at all for God or salvation, but the widespread tendency to view education, with social reform, as the complete answer to human problems, and to think of education, of its aims and its resources, purely on the human or even secular plane.

Part of our trouble, particularly in the Western world, arises from the fact that formal education is mainly in the hands of the state, with the strict exclusion of religion and little attention to the ethical. In this way the most significant dimension of man's life and of his education is omitted. On the other hand the Church has not adequately conceived or performed its task of education. What is needed first is a truer understanding of the meaning alike of education and salvation.

Present-day leaders are moving toward a deeper appreciation of the meaning of education. It is more than acquiring knowledge; a man may have "loads of learned lumber in his head" and not be educated. It is more than the acquirement of skills, favorite concern of a machine age; it should teach a man to live, not simply how to make a living. Briefly put, education is the process by which a man achieves the largest possibilities of personal development and the most fruitful life in relation to his world. It involves free growth from within; it is a life process, not something added from without. True, it demands aid from without; it is a process of social directing and giving and aiding, and not of mere individual resource and effort. Its aim is maturity but at the same time unceasing growth, for he is no longer truly alive who has ceased to see and seek and grow. Its goal is a life of unity and self-mastery and freedom within, of a harmonious and helpful relation to the world of men through which we are enriched by the wealth of the past as by the associations of the present, while in turn making our gift to this associated life. Here individual and social, freedom and dependence, are united.

Modern educational thought would commonly go thus far, but there are other elements which are not commonly included. Moral ideals, a spiritual dynamic, and a vital faith are basic to human life. We associate these with religion; they belong equally to education; indeed they are here of crucial importance. (1) The educated man is one who has learned the values of life which should direct his efforts and the moral ideals which have the right to command him. Without the recognition of an authority which is more than prudence or self-interest, there can be no abiding social order or assured social welfare, and equally no high individual achievement. (2) Education demands a dynamic, a source of inspiration and strength which is more than prudential considerations or promptings of ambition. (3) These call for a living faith, or, if you wish, a world view. It is not enough to learn from science how things behave, or to acquire the skills by which we can get what we want. We need to ask what it all means, this world which we are studying, this life for which we are preparing, what we ourselves

are, and the true goal of our life. It is through this third element that the first two are realized. God is the answer to the problem of moral ideals, of ultimate authority for individual and society, of spiritual dynamic, and of the meaning of life.

The intimate relation of education and salvation is seen if we revert to the conception of salvation here set forth as life through right relations and for right relations. For this is also the method and meaning of education. It seeks individual integration (wholeness, harmony) as well as a life in harmony with the world of nature and men and work secured through right understanding and attitudes. But the supreme relation of life, that of man to God, should not be excluded. Here is life's highest good, here is the clearest light on its meaning, here the deepest source of help. The increased interest of education in psychology points the same way. More is needed than growth conceived simply as development of the given life. Life is made up of discontinuities as well as continuity. Educators recognize how the problems of maturity root in childhood or infancy. They see the need of readjustment, reorientation, and change of basic attitudes, problems which directly concern us in the study of salvation.

But if education has need of the perspective and resources of religion, salvation has need of the element of education. Obviously that includes instruction. A man should have a clear grasp of his faith, a knowledge of its sacred writings and history, of its ideals and demands, as well as of the world in which he lives and which the Church serves. Religious education must give these.

And we need to see how God uses the way of education in giving men life. The Old Testament tells the story of the training of Israel. "When Israel was a child, I loved him. . . . I taught Ephraim to walk" (Hos. 11:1, 3). Again and again the idea of growth in life is emphasized in the New Testament. We are to be no longer children; we are to grow up in him who is our head. And here, as always, demand and gift, ethics and salvation, go together. That follows from the basic conception of salvation as life. There

is a beginning, the initial deed by which man is brought into fellowship with God. But there is needed a continued giving and continual growing. In our later discussion of ways of help, or means of grace, we shall consider the ways which God uses, not simply to maintain us in this life, but to enrich and increase it. This is salvation as education, God's training of men that they may grow up into a larger life of wisdom and love, of faith and freedom and righteousness.

In the light of this concept we see the educational task of the Church. It is more than the traditional idea of instruction and certainly more than the modern idea of self-expression and self-development. It means bringing men—children and adults—to a living knowledge of God, furthering a life in fellowship with God, so that with God's help they may live and grow. As Archbishop Temple says: "The main function of the Church is religious education, that is to say, the building up of thought and character in the knowledge of the love of God, so that the soul is always open to the operation of the Holy Spirit." [3] A hopeful sign is the increasing importance assigned to the Christian home as a vital part of the Christian communion and to its work of nurture.

In beginning the discussion of the doctrine of salvation it is well to note again that Christian truth is an organic whole. Salvation is not a doctrine which can be separately defined. That appears when we consider the work of God in salvation. Creation, revelation, and salvation are aspects of a single continuing work of the living God. The meaning of creation is seen in redemption. Redemption, in turn, is a part of the creative work of God; it is his continuing spiritual creativity. Further, revelation and redemption belong together; it is in his ongoing redemptive work, in history, in Christ, in Christian experience, that God is known.

It is equally important that we see things whole as we study salvation on the human side. Thus it is necessary that we see how the "religious" and the ethical, the gift and the demand, the divine

[3] *Mens Creatrix*, p. 43.

word and the human response, form at every stage a living whole. The saving gift of God demands the response (repentance, faith, the devotion of love). The response is made possible by the gift (mercy, forgiveness, grace). So time as the fateful moment of opportunity and decision (*kairos*, *krisis*) has its meaning in and through history. So individual and social form a whole, each requiring the other.

CHAPTER NINE

SALVATION IN INDIVIDUAL LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

THREE ASPECTS OF GOD'S WORK OF SALVATION ARE PRESENTED TO US IN THE BIBLE. THE FIRST MAY BE CALLED the historical-social. Its subject is the people of God, its object a redeemed humanity or the establishment of God's kingdom upon earth. In the Old Testament its concern is with Israel, in the New Testament with the Church and the kingdom. The second aspect is personal and present. The third is the life beyond: personal immortality in an eternal kingdom.

Salvation as Personal

The social-historical aspect is the dominant theme of the Old Testament. Its form is nationalistic, with only the beginnings of a universalistic outlook. Jehovah has made a covenant with his people Israel and will redeem them and establish them in righteousness and prosperity and peace. Yet the personal aspect is not wanting. Where there is faith in a personal-ethical God, there religion will become more and more personal-individual. Back of the message of the prophets was the personal experience of the prophets, knowing in their own lives the righteous God of demand and judgment, the merciful God of forgiveness and redemption (Isa. 6; Jer. 1; 31:31-34). The Psalms are the chief expression of this and in such fashion that they have remained aids for individual and corporate worship to this day.

The historic-social hope remained basic in the New Testament. It was with the message of the coming kingdom that Jesus began his work. It was the hope of the early Church that the establishment of that kingdom was at hand. "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" they asked. "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed," writes Paul (Acts 1:6; Rom. 13:11). But with this there went the emphasis on religion as personal fellowship with God. God's knowledge and concern, his love and care, his demand and his help, came to each individual. Each least sinner is a wandering child for whose return the Father is waiting, said Jesus; when you pray, go apart, look up in trust, and say "Father." The hope of a coming kingdom is always in the background, but there is a continued concern with the message of a present salvation for each individual.

It was only gradually that the primitive Church came to realize the basic importance and full meaning of this personal and present salvation which had come to them in Christ. Here again we see God's method of revelation by action. There was the negative side: their hope of a speedy return of Christ and consummation of the kingdom was not fulfilled. More important was the positive side: the realization that Christ lived and was in their midst; the experience of a new life, of God's forgiving mercy, of peace and power and love and joy which had made of them new men; the conviction that this new life was God's gift by his Spirit; the new fellowship in which they shared, a fellowship in which Christ was Lord and leader and living presence, whose life was God's gift, the creation of his Spirit. Here was salvation as a present reality as well as a future hope.

With this experience there came the need of interpretation, the more so when under Paul's leadership they faced their duty of carrying the new gospel to the Roman world. In this message the present and personal salvation became increasingly significant, as we see from Paul's letters. But there was no ready-made theology here, nor did they aim at one. The interpretation was the work

not of theologians but of preachers, bringing the gospel, seeking to make clear what this salvation was and how God saved.

All this helps us understand what we find in the New Testament. There is no systematic statement of a "plan of salvation." There is the clear conviction that God in Christ is reconciling men and bringing them life. There are many ways in whch they try to make their message plain. The chief figures used can be briefly indicated. (1) Salvation is reconciliation. Man in his sin is at enmity with God; he is "man in revolt." In Christ the God of mercy seeks to win him back, to reconcile him. (2) They speak of forgiveness and justification. The former is the simple term taken from human relations. The latter is an analogy from the court of justice, a legal term familiar to all. Literalized and absolutized it led later to the penal satisfaction theory. For Paul it was a figure which brought out God's mercy in forgiveness. The sinner stands condemned before the sovereign and righteous God—and God forgives. (3) A third figure is suggested by such words as ransom and redemption (buying back). He who sins is a slave of sin. Salvation is deliverance from this slavery. (4) Still another figure is that of adoption: God in his mercy has adopted us, has taken us into his family as children.

In its deeper meanings this personal salvation was seen as a gift of life, or as the making of new men. So we have salvation set forth (5) as a being born again, or regenerated, as becoming a new man, a new creature or creation. (6) Finally, there is the expressive figure of death and resurrection. Sin means death, the death of the true life of man; salvation is resurrection from this death, it is being made truly alive. Paul uses the figure in connection with the idea of mystical union with Christ. As Christ died on the cross, so man dies to sin; joined by faith to Christ, man rises with him to newness of life.

Though there is no systematic formulation of doctrine here, there is abiding value for Christian thought. The task of theology is to bring these insights into an ordered whole, to use such light as

the Church has gained from centuries of Christian thought and experience that we may interpret for our day the meaning of the Christian way of help. Today there is a renewed interest in the problems of associated life and social salvation; but the basic importance of individual salvation remains. Christianity is concerned with a new world, but there can be no new world without new men. And despite all our advance in scientific knowledge and material wealth, the need for personal salvation is becoming ever more insistent. Men are divided within and want unity. They are filled with uncertainty and fear. They are looking for confidence and courage and peace of soul. What is the salvation which we offer?

Salvation as Life

The basic idea can be briefly stated. Salvation is life. Life comes through right relations. The supreme relation is that of man to God. Christ's work is to bring man and God together. So doing, he makes all things new—new men and a new world.

To speak of right relations as the condition of life is to affirm that there is a God-given order within which life is found. That is as true of the spiritual world as it is of nature. It does not mean mechanism in nature or legalism in religion. It belongs to our faith in a God of truth and reason and righteousness, a faithful and dependable God. What Wordsworth says in his "Ode to Duty" we extend, as did he, to the whole realm of life:

> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

Physical survival and material well-being are contingent for us upon our knowledge of this order; so is our life as moral-spiritual beings. Man is unique in the number of relations which constitute his life. That means a height of achievement to which he may attain, a depth of lostness to which he may fall, beyond that of any other creature of earth.

The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches had for its theme "Man's Disorder and God's Design." Sin is "man's disorder." It is the failure to enter into right relations with God and his world. This means being lost, as the coin was lost off in its dark corner, the sheep away from the fold, the son away from home. And in the New Testament death and being lost mean the same. Life is being in right relations. Death, spiritual as well as physical, is being out of right relations. Christ's salvation means his work in seeking the lost and bringing them into right relations.

Man's life is made up of four relations. All four have meaning for his salvation though not all have equal significance. There is his relation to the natural world with its gifts and tasks, its hardships and its pleasures, its seductions and its possibilities for self-development and service. There is the relation to his fellows, taking innumerable forms, bringing highest joys and deepest sorrows, offering the chance to love and serve and achieve and equally to debase ourselves and destroy others. Here again are the paths of life and death. There is a man's relation to himself: the chance to choose between the higher self and the lower, the task of bringing conflicting interests into harmony and securing peace and unity where there is strife.

The fourth relation is our relation to God, and here our study of salvation must begin. For God is not just another person, and this is not just one relation by the side of others. God is the beginning and the end of all relations. "In thy light do we see light" (Ps. 36:9). "Religion is the first thing and the last thing," says one of H. G. Wells's characters, "and until a man has found God and been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honor. But all these things fall into place and life falls into place only with God." [1] It is not, as has sometimes been suggested, that all other problems, individual and social, are automatically settled when once men are right with God. It does mean that here is the basic relation. Here we gain light for all dark places and strength

[1] *Mr. Britling Sees It Through,* p. 442.

for all our needs. God is our highest good, and in him and through him we gain all other goods. And when we are right with him, then we have the spirit in which all the other relations of life are to be lived. "This is eternal life, that they know thee" (John 17:3).

The Christian word for this relation is sonship, and the Christian understanding of what that means is to be found in the life and spirit of Jesus. The sonship relation has a double meaning. First as to character: to be a son is to have the spirit of the Father. Sonship means kinship of spirit. The quality of this spirit Jesus characterized in the Beatitudes and elsewhere in the Sermon on the Mount. He sums it up in the word "love," the spirit of pure, unselfish, all-inclusive good will. You are to love, he says, that you may be sons of your Father. Its second meaning is active; it is life with the Father lived in faith, reverence, worship, trust, dependence, communion in prayer. It means the doing of God's will in the active service of men: "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5:17).

But all this would seem not so much to solve man's problem of the way to life as rather to make its solution impossible. Life comes through right relation with God, and that relation involves oneness with God in spirit and in life. That, however, is just what man lacks; he is a sinner, separated from God, opposed to God in his inner spirit and his way of life. What is the use of quoting "closer is he than breathing" when his nearness only makes plainer the gulf that divides? Nor can man say: Now I will make myself good so that I may enter upon this fellowship with God and thus have life. That is just what we cannot do. That is where we need saving help: to become the men that we should be. So we face the paradox: a man can overcome evil and have life only as he is in fellowship with God, but so long as he is evil, that fellowship is impossible.

The Christian answer is found in the gospel of the forgiving God. There is no abatement here of the moral demand: men are to be sons of their Father in spirit and life. But the way to sonship is through the mercy of God. This is the paradox of grace; this is the gospel way: God receives men as sons in order that they may

become sons. In his sin man has turned from God. By his sin he has broken the Father-son relation in which alone he can have life. He cannot create in himself the right spirit or establish that right relation. God does that when man turns to him in repentance and faith. He forgives and receives and gives himself to men, not because of their desert but because of his pure and infinite love. And in this fellowship God gives man life. This is the gospel of God's forgiving and self-giving. It has often been overlaid if not concealed by theory or dogma. It is as simple as the practice of Jesus when he received sinners and ate with them, and as the teaching in the parables in which he met the criticism which his practice raised (Luke 15). The parable of the prodigal son is really the parable of the forgiving Father, of his seeking and forgiving love.

The doctrine of forgiveness is simple. Proclaimed as the gospel, it has been understood and received by the lowliest. It is none the less profound. It is far more than any mere remission of penalty. It deals with the greatest forces and the deepest realities, those of persons and personal relations. In turn it makes the supreme demand upon man: the about-face of repentance, the surrender and trust involved in faith, the life of a continuing fellowship in which man offers himself to God with each succeeding day and in each new situation. The basic idea remains the same throughout: God in his infinite mercy receives the repentant and believing sinner into a living and life-giving fellowship.

What this means and how it comes to pass appears when we consider the great Christian terms in which this has been set forth: grace, repentance, faith, forgiveness, reconciliation, words worn smooth by much usage but whose meaning must be grasped if we are to understand the Christian way of salvation.

Grace

Grace comes first. The New Testament was written in the common Greek of its day. Its words were those of common speech. But it gave those words a peculiar depth and wealth of meaning. Notable examples are the words grace and love. In common

Greek usage grace (*charis*) had three meanings which it retains today. It could refer to a quality of person, of speech, or of action; then it meant attractiveness, charm, graciousness. It was used to characterize an attitude toward others, that of friendliness or good will. Finally, as when we speak today of grace at meat, it might mean a response of thanksgiving. Our immediate concern is with the meaning of grace as representing the character of God and his attitude toward men. The word itself is not important. Jesus does not employ it. He uses words like Father, love, mercy, to express this truth that God is forgiving love, infinite and undeserved good will. The sinner's hope is in the saving mercy of God. Salvation is by grace.

The idea of grace was not a New Testament innovation. Prophet and psalmist had dwelt on the lovingkindness of Jehovah; their hope rested on God's gracious purpose to redeem his people. But it was Christ who through his word and life and death gave full and compelling expression to this truth. It was Paul who made clear to the early Church what was new in their faith. Grace was the crucial word. In the end the Church followed Paul, though not all grasped it as clearly as he did. In the history of the Church this truth was often obscured, especially by a recurrent moralism or legalism. Men used the word, but they built up systems of rules and penances, of sacraments and ceremonials, whose observance was declared necessary for salvation. The leaders who recalled the Church to its central faith, however, and brought to it a renewal of life, men like Augustine, Luther, and Wesley, all went back to Paul's gospel of salvation as coming through the grace of God.

In its primary meaning grace has reference to God himself, to his spirit of pure good will, his attitude of mercy. In a secondary sense grace is that which flows out from God to men. This gift of God is first of all forgiveness. This is the first step in salvation, to come into life-giving fellowship with God. To be separated from God is to be lost; to have God is to have life. We cannot earn this fellowship by our merit or achieve it by ourselves. Man cannot raise himself to God. The fellowship, the new life, comes from

God and is the gift of his grace. Over and over again Paul reiterates his great theme. In one brief paragraph, Rom. 5:15-17, he repeats the idea no less than seven times, using the two terms free gift and grace.

This gracious forgiveness, however, is but the beginning. Forgiving and giving go together and both are needed throughout the Christian life. Day by day we need forgiveness for our imperfect and sinful lives; day by day by God's mercy we have fellowship with him and receive life from him. This is the grace of God. The merciful God is continually giving himself in love, and the needy man is constantly receiving forgiveness and help. This saving relationship is the "state of grace," and the continued help is spoken of as "enabling grace." "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Elsewhere Paul writes, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Paul's supreme concern, and that of the New Testament, is with grace in the first sense, as God's forgiving and saving mercy.

First, then, comes the belief that salvation is God's deed, his free gift. But that does not exclude the human side. God offers forgiveness and fellowship and life. The offer is a challenge; the gift cannot be made without the human response. The two New Testament words for the needed response are repentance and faith.

Repentance

Repentance (*metanoia*) means literally change of mind. In the Christian sense it is an inner about-face, a radical reversal of life attitude. There is more here than mere sorrow for past misdeeds or a changed point of view. Mind and heart and will are all involved. First comes the vision of God. We see the Lord high and lifted up, God holy and righteous and merciful. In that presence we see ourselves in our sin and guilt and know God's purpose as the only way for our life. Then comes the decision, that deed which is at the heart of repentance. It is the prodigal saying, "I will arise and go to my Father." It is a turning from the past, a hatred for

the old evil, the commitment to the new good and the higher way. It is our yes, not only to God's judgment upon us, but to his will for us. And because it is no mere remorse for the past, this repentance is not a once for all affair; it is a life task, as Luther rightly saw. It is to be an ever-renewed attitude and act of confession and contrition, of turning from evil and devotion to God and the good.

The lack of this moral passion, of positive hatred of evil and devotion to good, is a constant danger alike in the individual Christian life and in the associated life of Church and community and nation. Here is the first great obstacle to the coming of a new world order, of justice and peace in international life. The nations feel that it is necessary in maintaining their position and power to pass sharp judgment on the defects of others, but they admit no fault or error on their own part, and criticism from within they tend to regard as disloyalty if not treason. This is the avowed position of the totalitarian state; its demand of absolute obedience involves the assumption that its will makes right and is right. The cult of nationalism brings the same danger to other lands. With nations, as well as individuals, there is no safety, no salvation, without humility, confession of fault, the turning from known wrong, the devotion to truth and justice and good will. The Church needs to call nations as well as individuals to repentance, as did the prophets of old.

Faith

If grace is the term to describe God's nature and his attitude to man, then faith is the best single word to indicate the response which is called for by such a God. The saving love and mercy of God can become effective in us only as we answer in trust and surrender. And that is faith. Faith is the answer of person to Person, of the repentant, believing, self-surrendering man to this God and his gift. Only through this open door can the saving God come in.

In its broadest sense faith means confidence, or trust, a confidence that goes beyond the evidence of the senses or the demonstration

of logic. As such it enters into every activity of human life, and necessarily so. Criticism is not excluded. It is not a blind confidence that is called for. We weigh the evidence of our senses. We check by experiment and ongoing experience, including the experience of others. We weigh the judgment of others qualitatively and not merely quantitatively. We criticize the processes of reason. Faith does not require that a man should "make his reason blind." But in the end, if we are ever to act and achieve, we must trust. *Hier gilt nur der eine Rat*, said a great German scientist of a couple of generations ago, *vertraue und handle*. "Trust and act." Even the scientist must trust, trust his senses, his processes of reason as he interprets, and the work of his fellow scientists. The engineer trusts the conclusions of the scientist. Both assume the fact of a natural order and its essential dependability, of which there can never be a complete demonstration. Quite as important is the place of confidence in the social order. There we must say: there is no truly human life that is not social, no social life without some mutual confidence, or faith. And always there is a certain spiritual quality in faith. The confidence of faith rests upon the belief that in man and in the universe there is something of reason and rightness, of value and dependability.

Faith has its supreme expression in religion. The heart of all high religion is the faith that in some ultimate way "goodness and power are one." Religion is belief in a world of a higher order, a world not visible to the eye, not demonstrable by reason, a world that can be known, indeed, but only in a living experience whose requirement is trust and obedience. Religious faith differs from the faith of common life in its object and in its demand. It offers, not a partial good, but the supreme good. Its object is not an impersonal world order or finite and imperfect creatures, but the God of infinite goodness and power. And so its demand is an absolute trust and obedience. Our concern here is specifically with the nature and place of faith in the Christian doctrine of salvation.

The object of this saving faith is God, the God who has come to us in Jesus Christ. Christian faith is trust in a Person. Such a faith involves surrender of our lives, of heart and mind and will; but

it is more than obedience, more than submission to authority. It is more than the acceptance of doctrine or creed. In Roman Catholicism, and in not a little Protestantism, these two ideas are combined and faith is conceived as the acceptance of a body of teachings, or beliefs, upon a given authority. Thus the *Catholic Encyclopedia* declares that faith, first and objectively, is "the sum of truths revealed by God in Scripture and tradition, and which the Church presents to us in a brief form in her creeds; subjectively, faith stands for the habit or virtue by which we assent to those truths." [2] Here the Church is conceived as the custodian of the tradition, the authoritative interpreter of tradition and Scripture, and thus as the authority to which man submits, upon whose word he accepts what he is to believe. Faith itself becomes belief on authority. Akin to this is the idea of faith in some Protestant circles as the acceptance of doctrine, or teaching, upon authority. The authority in this case is the Scripture, and that commonly involves the idea of verbal inspiration. In practice, however, this usually means that the object of faith is a certain statement of doctrine as given in some particular creed or in some selected body of "fundamentals." In both cases revelation is the communication of a body of truth and faith is the obedient acceptance of these teachings. With this conception of faith it is easy to see why Roman Catholicism joins works with faith as the necessary condition of salvation.

Nothing less is here involved than the whole question of the meaning of religion and of the way of salvation. For evangelical thought religion means a personal relation with the living God in a fellowship of faith and obedience; salvation is the gift of God in and through that fellowship to which he admits the repentant, believing, self-surrendering sinner. Truth and understanding are both involved here. Faith is response to a God who speaks. Insight belongs to faith as truly as trust and obedience. The biblical writers are interpreters, not mere recorders. They deal with truth, not simply with events but with their meaning. They are concerned with what God is seeking to say to men, and they call on men to

[2] V, 753.

hear and understand. The Church seeks to set forth this word of God to men in its teaching and preaching, to declare it in its creeds and doctrines. The object of faith is not the biblical record, the doctrines, or the creeds; it is the living God.

Equally vital for faith is the ethical aspect. The word which brings conviction comes first, but faith is not present until the conviction issues in decision, in our surrender in obedient trust to the God who has spoken. This is more than a matter of "good works" required as a supplement to faith. Faith is at once the initial "Yes" with which the new life begins and the daily "Yes" in which we open our life to God, receive his Spirit of love and righteousness, and express this spirit in all our doings. Freedom from the law meant for Paul not a freedom from moral demand, but a deeper and more searching obligation. In a striking phrase he speaks of "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).[3] Paul seeks to win the Gentile world to this new obedience. It is not the obedience which a master asks of his servants or a king of his subjects. It is the free devotion of one who has been freely convinced and who gives a complete obedience because he can now completely trust. It is this new kind of obedience to which Paul would win men, the obedience of faith.

So far we have considered faith in its primary meaning as a word of action, as faith not *the* faith, a verbal noun rather than a substantive. With faith, just as with truth, we lack the corresponding verb in English. We do not say "faithing" but believing, and so we tend to lose a vital element and to make it mean simply holding for true. The active meaning comes to clearer expression when the object is a person, not an idea or doctrine, especially when, as with the Revised Standard Version, the translation reads "believe *in*" (for both *epi* and *eis*).

But faith is also used in the New Testament and in Christian thought with a substantive meaning. This is really implied when

[3] The Revised Standard Version reverts to the King James translation, "obedience to the faith." The translation here given, "obedience of faith," follows the American Standard Version, Juelicher (*Glaubens-Gehorsam*), and Weizsaecker (*Gehorsam des Glaubens*). This interpretation of the phrase fits in with the whole movement of thought in Romans.

we use faith in the active sense, for it involves awareness, insight, conviction. Hence faith in a secondary sense is used to indicate that which is believed. This is what is meant in speaking of *the* faith. So Paul speaks of "preaching the faith." *The* faith, as here used, means the gospel which Paul preached—that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, that men are saved through faith in him, that through his Spirit God gives to man a new life here and the hope of the life beyond. The error into which the later Church so often fell was that of identifying this faith with the formulations of its creeds or systems and then assuming that saving faith meant the acceptance of some body of doctrine.

Forgiveness, Justification, and Reconciliation

As we turn now to God's action in salvation, three New Testament terms call for closer definition: forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation. They all deal with the central Christian conviction: separated from God by his sin, man is lost; God in his mercy forgives man and receives him into fellowship; in that fellowship man has life. All three refer to the central fact of forgiving and life-giving mercy. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"—so Paul summarizes it (2 Cor. 5:19).

What forgiveness means must be understood in the light of what has been said about grace, repentance, and faith. It is no mere remission of penalty—there are consequences of sin which forgiveness cannot wipe out. It is no mere restoration of a *status quo ante*. Forgiveness looks forward, not merely back. It is creative. Its work is that of creative love. Sin at once separates from God and destroys. It is this separation that must be overcome. Man must be brought into life-giving fellowship with God. Until that is done, there will be no redeeming power in his life. And man cannot lift himself to God. There is only one way left: the free forgiveness of God. Forgiveness means admission to fellowship, and fellowship with God means the overcoming of sin and the giving of the new life.[4]

This is what the critics of Jesus overlooked, the fact that for-

[4] Cf. Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, pp. 288-302.

giveness is redemptive. To them Jesus seemed to be a subverter of morals. Did he not treat sinners and saints in the same way, as though righteousness made no difference? "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). Jesus countered with the three parables of Luke 15, with their picture of the seeking and forgiving God. Rightly, says Montefiore, the noted Jewish scholar:

> Jesus has received no grander and more glorious title to fame than these words "the friend of sinners," coined in mockery and opprobrium. . . . The Rabbis attached no less value to repentance than Jesus. . . . But to seek out the sinner, and, instead of avoiding the bad companion, to choose him as your friend in order to work his moral redemption, this was, I fancy, something new in the religious history of Israel. The method of Jesus inaugurated a new idea, the idea of redemption.[5]

Jesus was not leveling religion down; he was lifting men up. He, too, was concerned with righteousness; but the way to righteousness was differently envisaged by him. For him the way was that of the humble, penitent, believing heart, which led to righteousness because it led to God. For the Pharisees the matter of righteousness rested with man. Man was to keep the law; that was righteousness. Meanwhile the "sinners," responding to Jesus' message, were pressing into the kingdom, while the "righteous," satisfied, remained without.

Justification is the term that Paul uses to denote the act of forgiving mercy by which God receives the sinner. But while it means the same for him as forgiveness, it is not so good a term. Its background is that of the judge, the court, and the law. That, indeed, is why Paul chose it. It helped him to bring out the sharp contrast of grace with the way of the law. The law dealt with man in factual fashion: this man is innocent, let him go free; this man is guilty, let him be punished. With Christ there had come a new way, says Paul. The sinner's lot is decided not by what he is, but by what God is. He is justified, not by what he has done, not by works and merit, but by God's free grace. Forgiven, he stands accepted before God. This is simply Jesus' message of the

[5] *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 57.

forgiving God, and there is one Gospel passage (though only one) which uses the term justify. The penitent tax collector "went down to his house justified" (Luke 18:14).

But the term justification in theological thought has often been given a meaning that is counter to this usage. It is wrong, says Rome, to hold "that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy." Justification is viewed as a factual recognition of what man is. We are justified by God because we "are just, receiving justice within us," because we are "renewed in the spirit of [our] minds" (Eph. 4:23). Justification here is not forgiveness. God makes man just and then simply recognizes what he is. "The instrumental cause (of this justness) is the sacrament of baptism." [6]

Equally removed from the idea of a gracious forgiveness is that form of Protestant teaching which asserts that justification is possible because God "imputes" to the sinner the righteousness of another (Christ). But righteousness is a quality of spirit, personal and ethical, and not something that can be transferred, like a garment, or like credit on account, from one to another. Nor does justification mean that God discovers in man's repentance and faith the root and the promise of righteousness, and accepts this in its stead. In all this there is an overlooking or a denial of the free forgiveness which springs from God's grace alone.

There is, of course, a problem involved in the idea of free forgiveness, an ethical problem. It must neither run counter to the faith in a righteous God, nor be unconcerned with the need of righteousness in man. But this problem is resolved when we recall again on the one side God's demand of repentance and faith, on the other the regenerative and creative power of love and of the life of fellowship with God which is granted through forgiveness.[7]

[6] *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent:* Session VI, "Decree on Justification," ch. VII.

[7] Suggestive is this item from the autobiography of a modern apostle of good will, or compassion, Mahatma Gandhi, not a professed Christian but a man who acknowledged his indebtedness to the Gospels and who sealed with his life his devotion to the way of self-giving love. Once, as a boy, deeply repentant for an act of theft and knowing how it would grieve him, he wrote out his confession and prayer of forgiveness and brought them to his father. He tells how the tears

Reconciliation is the more inclusive term. It refers to the whole work of God in Christ: God revealing his judgment and mercy, summoning men to himself, forgiving men and receiving them as his children. So Paul speaks of his work as the ministry of reconciliation, of the gospel as the word of reconciliation, and sums up the meaning of Christ when he says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). The word brings out the personal-ethical nature of salvation. It requires God's action and man's response, God's love met by man's self-surrender, and so the mutual personal relation of Father and child where before had been estrangement. In turn the gospel of reconciling love becomes an ethical imperative: men are to seek the reconciliation of their brother men. The urgent need of this should be obvious to all in a day when classes and nations assume that individual advantage is the common goal and force the means of solution.

---

fell from his father's eyes. "Those pearl drops of love cleansed my heart and washed my sins away. . . . Today I know that it was pure Ahimsa. When such Ahimsa becomes universal, it transforms everything it touches. There is no limit to its power."

CHAPTER TEN

CHRIST AND MAN'S SALVATION

FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRIST AND SALVATION ARE INSEPARABLE TERMS. TO BRING THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION WAS to proclaim Christ. If we ask what this salvation was which Christ brought, there is no single answer; for it included nothing less than the whole realm of faith and life and hope. There was the new vision of God ("the God and Father of our Jesus Christ"), the life from God (forgiveness, fellowship, the gift of the Spirit), the new ways of life after the spirit of Christ, the new fellowship (the Church as the body of Christ), the hope of the coming kingdom on earth and in heaven. The emphasis might vary: now it was on forgiveness and reconciliation as with Paul, now on Christ's meaning as the incarnate truth and life of God as with John, now on his priestly work as the sacrifice which ended all sacrifices as in Hebrews. But no one of these was thought of as sole or exclusive.

If we ask how Christ brought this salvation, again there is no single answer or attempt at systematic statement. The whole New Testament is the story of how he "brought life and immortality to light" (2 Tim. 1:10). Theology has tended to give a restricted meaning to the "work of Christ." Sometimes it has stressed almost exclusively his death, sometimes the idea of incarnation, while a modern liberalism has seen his saving work as that of the teacher and example. The familiar tradition has presented him as prophet, priest, and king. All three are included in the New Testament picture of what he brought to men and how he gave them life. In witness of his word, his spirit and life, his death, his living

presence and power in the Church and with his disciples, he is seen as prophet of God, as mediator between God and man, and as rightful Lord of men and of his Church. But all this work is one. It is significant that the four books to which the distinctive name of Gospel was given by the ancient Church were those whose main theme was the life of Jesus.[1]

The New Testament Teaching

From the first the death of Christ was seen as central in his work. Familiarity has somewhat dulled our minds to the wonder of that strange first chapter in the life of the Church. The death of agony and shame at the hands of his foes seemed at first the end of all their hopes. They could only say, "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). Then followed the assurance that he lived, that God had raised him from the dead, that he was indeed the Messiah of God. Then, more slowly, there came the realization that his death, due indeed to evil men, yet lay in the plan of God, that it belonged to God's way for man's salvation. What was foolishness to others became for them "the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24); what had seemed like weakness they saw as "the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). "He died for all" (2 Cor. 5:15), they declared. "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23). They saw in Christ's death, not just the mark of his devotion, but the expression of God's infinite love seeking to save. "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16.)

But the question still remained: Why was it necessary that Christ should die, and how was his death related to their salvation? The query did not spring from speculative interest. It arose inevitably as they reflected on the meaning of the gospel and especially as they brought the gospel to others. When we look at the New Testament presentation as a whole, certain facts stand out. (1) Christ's death is central in the thought of his work, but it is not

[1] Cf. Emil Brunner, *Die christliche Lehre von Schoepfung und Erloesung*, p. 332.

a separate act or item. It is the consummation of his life on earth, bringing it to final expression, but never separated from what went before. Similarly, his death and resurrection marked the beginning of his work as spiritual Lord and world Savior. (2) The message concerning his death is dynamic, not static; it is concerned not with setting forth a doctrine but with proclaiming a deed and its meaning for man's salvation. (3) There is no suggestion of a revealed and authoritative doctrine. What we have is the effort of the Church to understand and to interpret to others what Christ's death meant, and it does this by finding symbols and analogies in the traditional (Jewish) faith and in the common life. It is the work of preachers rather than of theologians.[2]

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament afforded the first analogy. This is the special concern of the writer of Hebrews. He finds, indeed, various analogies and contrasts. He declares that Christ's death is the sacrifice required for the establishment of the new covenant, just as blood was needed for the ratification of the old. It is needed to purify conscience from dead works, which the old sacrifices could not do. Through it we have been consecrated (Heb. 9; 10; 13:20). The analogy of sacrifice appears with Paul again and again and in varied forms. "We preach Christ crucified." "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed." "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (1 Cor. 1:23; 5:7; Eph. 5:2).

Closely associated are two conceptions taken from the legal-juridical field. The first is penal. Man is under judgment (*katakrima*) of death because of his sin. Christ took this penalty upon himself in his death (Rom. 8:1; Gal. 3:10-13). This thought goes back to Isa. 53. Christ was "put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, . . . to prove . . . that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25-26. Cf. Eph. 5:2; I John 4:10). Here the form of the analogy is legal, the motive is clearly ethical-religious: to assert the holiness of God, the meaning of sin as against

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

such a God, the holy God as merciful and forgiving, the holiness and love both manifested in Christ's death. The point of the analogy is not the idea of an inflexible penal system, but the nature of a redemption which expresses both holiness and love.

The other figure, that of debt and its cancellation, is taken from civil law. We are under obligation of obedience. Sin is debt. Paul declares that God has "forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; . . . nailing it to the cross" (Col. 2:13-14). Here again the purpose of the figure is plain—the emphasis on free forgiveness as against legal demand. Jesus uses this same figure of debt to teach that the spirit of undeserved mercy as seen in God is to be the rule of man's life (Matt. 6:12; 18:21-35).

The idea of a conflict with the powers of evil represents another New Testament approach to the work of Christ. It is found especially with Paul, but it rests back upon the common belief in a spiritual world of evil conceived in personal terms. Paul speaks of angels, principalities, powers, elemental spirits of the universe, world rulers of this present darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, as well as of the evil one, the devil, the god of this world (Rom. 8:38-39; Col. 2:20; Eph. 6:11-12; 2 Cor. 4:4). These "rulers of this age" (1 Cor. 2:8) crucified Christ. Man by sinning has come under their dominion. By his death Christ delivered men from these evil powers, though the final conflict and deliverance will come with his return (1 Cor. 15:24-27). The modern reader, literalistic and realistic, is repelled by this mythological presentation. Yet Paul is dealing here with a significant aspect of Christ's work. There is a power of evil. Paul knew it in his own life and found deliverance from it through Christ (Rom. 7; 8). We know it today, working as a tragic force in individual lives, in history, in our social order, and in the life of nations.

The idea of the Incarnation is basic to the New Testament conception of the work of Christ. It is not a question of the later two-nature doctrine but the central conviction that in Christ God

had come to men, entering our life for its redemption. Jesus was more than a prophet speaking for God, more than an anointed one, the Messiah sent by God. In Christ God was present, God was speaking, God was acting. This conviction is most explicit in Paul and John. Paul speaks of the pre-existent Christ who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). John speaks of the Word, the Logos that was with God and that "became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14). We have here the beginnings of christological doctrine, reflected in another form in the virgin birth stories of Matthew and Luke. But we miss the significance of such passages except as we note clearly their double concern: first, with the redemptive meaning of Christ; second, with the conviction that this redemption was from God and that God was in Christ. Using the word "incarnation" in this primary religious meaning, we may say that for the New Testament and for all Christian faith the Incarnation is clear as God's way of coming to man for his redemption.

How did Jesus himself conceive of his work? In seeking to answer this question we do not forget that our Gospels are not primarily historical records. They are concerned to present *the* gospel, to bring God's word to man as it came in the word and work of Christ. But the history is there. The gospel was given as God acted in these historical events. They present the events while they interpret the meaning. The historical interest belongs to their faith, a fact which the extreme negative criticism has failed to see. Without reverting then to an impossible literalism, viewing the gospel narrative as a whole, we have reason to believe that here is a basically true picture of the historic Jesus as he lived and wrought for men.

On the basis of this picture we may say, first, that Jesus began his public work with the conviction that he was called of God to proclaim the coming kingdom. With this was the realization that he was the Messiah—God's servant anointed for this task. The temptation story shows what questions this raised in his mind and how God led him into the way which he followed throughout his life. We see how his dependence on God made him independent

of popular ideas and expectations and even in relation to details of Old Testament references. Humble dependence upon God's leading and help, utter devotion to God's will, and the thought of service rather than rule marked his attitude. When we recognize the variations in the report of Jesus' words as given in the accounts of the Last Supper and in the notable passage of Mark 10:42-45 (Luke 22:25-27), the fact remains that Jesus saw his calling as that of servant. He saw himself as the Suffering Servant of Isa. 53, not as the messianic king who was to subdue the nations by his might and rule them with a rod of iron.

He saw his first task as that of witness: pointing men to the God of holiness and mercy, proclaiming the good news of his coming rule, calling men to repentance and faith and the life of love in the spirit of the Father. But apparently he saw from the first that to follow God's will for his life and complete his witness might mean the giving of that life in death. The temptation in the wilderness, the mount of transfiguration which was really the mount of struggle and decision before he set his face toward Jerusalem, the last struggle in the Garden, these all point the same way. "We cannot doubt, as we survey the whole tenor of the life and teachings of Jesus, that everything leads up to the cross and there finds its explanation." [3] The cross was his final witness and appeal to his people, his final act of obedience to God, the final sacrifice of love in a death which was one with his life.

The Church's Doctrine of the Work of Christ

Two facts are to be noted as we consider the different theories of the work of Christ which have obtained in the Church. First, the theory should always be considered in relation to the total doctrinal position. The ideas of God and the world, of man and sin, of the Church and the kingdom, all enter in here, as does the general world view. Second, the starting point is commonly some one of the New Testament figures noted above, but often isolated, literalized, and developed into a formal theory.

[3] E. F. Scott, *The First Age of Christianity*, p. 107.

One of the earliest theories was that of the ransom paid to Satan. Its background was the religious (not metaphysical) dualism which saw a spiritual kingdom of evil ruled by Satan. Its analogy was the familiar fact of men taken captive, held as slaves, and redeemed by payment of a price. Man by his sin had fallen under the dominion of Satan. God offered to deliver his Son in death as a ransom for captive men. But Satan did not know that Christ was divine and that death could not hold him. So Jesus rose again, and men were freed from Satan's bondage.

A more significant contribution, of the Eastern Church, was the conception of salvation through incarnation. There is a definite background of metaphysical thought here, but the primary interest is practical and soteriological. Man as man is finite and mortal. Sin has separated him from God through whom he might have been lifted to immortality. Now he is corrupt, under the judgment of God and the law of death. So the mortal and corrupt nature of man must be transformed into the divine and immortal. The personal-ethical categories are not excluded here; they could not be in any presentation of the Christian faith. But the stress is on the mystical-metaphysical. Christ, the eternal Word, enters our humanity. He becomes one with our race. Out of love he willingly suffers death. He does this "that in his death all may die," though he himself as immortal could not die. Thus "by virtue of the Word's indwelling in a single human body," all men "were clothed with incorruption." The death of Christ is still of central importance, but not as the precondition to salvation. It is part of the total fact of Christ's incarnation and it is the Incarnation which is the divine way of salvation. Alike the way of salvation and the meaning of salvation are summed up in the well-known word: "He assumed humanity that we might become God." [4] Within this framework Greek thinkers found place for the idea of Christ's death as a ransom paid to Satan or as a satisfaction to God. Athanasius even suggests that Christ's "death in the air, that is, on the

[4] Quotations are from Athanasius, *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, secs. 6-10.

cross;" was right and natural, for the air is the sphere of the devil; so, being lifted up into the air, Christ vanquishes the prince of the power of the air and reopens the road to heaven.

The abstract terms and the metaphysical formulation of this doctrine of incarnation and salvation seem to us remote from the central religious realities of the Christian experience of salvation. We should recognize, however, that the primary interest was not speculative but religious. It was the fear that the truth of man's salvation was endangered which spurred the fight against Arianism and docetism.

The defects of this doctrine are obvious. God is not impersonal substance; he is spiritual-personal being. Religion is man's life lived in personal relation with this God. Salvation is God's gift of this life. Life like this, personal and ethical, can only be given through personal-ethical means. It cannot be expressed in impersonal terms of substance and nature, nor mediated by a metaphysical union of natures taking place in Christ at conception or birth and by the reception of a divine substance in the transformed elements of the sacraments. All this is nonpersonal, nonethical. Salvation is personal-ethical; it can come only as the God of mercy offers forgiveness and fellowship to sinful man and man responds in faith and obedience. In such a fellowship God gives himself to man in forgiveness and grace and man knows the transforming power of God's presence and becomes a child of God in spirit and in truth.

If the emphasis of the East in relation to Christ's work of salvation was on the Incarnation, that of the West was on his death. Representative was Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo,* influential not only in the Roman Catholic Church but later on in Protestantism. In contrast with the East the conception of God and of man's relation to God is strongly ethical-personal. But the relation is not that of the merciful Father and the sinful son; it is rather that of Ruler and subject. In the background was the elaborate system of penance which the Church had developed. Anselm brought out the principles that underlay this system and in turn helped to further it. That system was legalistic. Contrition and confession were re-

quired of the sinner, but these, with faith added, were not deemed enough. There had to be satisfaction, a penance imposed; and the priest, acting as judge with authority from the great Judge, imposed that penalty.

Anselm begins with the idea of the Incarnation, as his title indicates: "Why was it necessary that God should become man?" In his answer he unites the ideas of incarnation and atonement. His argument is simple. Sin is debt: it is man's failure to give God what is due him. That debt must be paid or the sinner must be punished. Justice requires this, and if God is not just, then he is not God—so Anselm insists. But man cannot make this satisfaction for past sin and for good reason. First, sin is of infinite gravity because it is committed against an infinite God, and finite man cannot make an infinite satisfaction. Second, man is impotent just because of his sin. Finally, all that man can offer is the obedience which is required of him at the moment; he cannot make up for the past.

The only way out, says Anselm, is through one who is both God and man. As man Christ could make satisfaction for the sins of man, could pay to God what was due from man. As God he could render a satisfaction of infinite value, and this he did in his death. At only one point does Anselm seem to go beyond the legalistic framework, and that is in the idea of the solidarity of Christ as man with the human race. But here, as in the East, the solidarity is metaphysical rather than personal-ethical.

To be distinguished from Anselm's theory is that of *penal* satisfaction. In both cases the point of view is juridical, but the latter moves over from civil to criminal law. What is demanded is not satisfaction in payment of a debt but punishment of the transgressor. Christ becomes our substitute, taking upon himself the wrath of God and the penalty of death demanded by our sin.

There are two basic objections to these satisfaction theories. First, the conception of salvation is inadequate. Salvation is more than exemption from punishment or cancellation of debt. These at best are the negative aspects. Salvation is life, life from God, life

with God, the life of new men in a new world. Second, these theories miss what is central in the Christian way of help. They are right in their stress on the holiness of God and the seriousness of sin. We still need Anselm's word: "You have not considered of how great weight sin is." But he misses the heart of the gospel: God overcomes sin through the love that was in Christ, the love that judges and forgives, that is free and undeserved, a suffering, self-giving, creative love. In these theories the divine grace does not really enter in; what we have is the Judge who is satisfied only by payment or punishment. Nor is there, strictly, forgiveness; for when the debt has been paid, there is no more anything to forgive.

To these conceptions of Christ's work must be added the "moral influence theory." It became widely influential in modern thought as this revolted against the satisfaction theories, but it goes back in fact to Abelard in the twelfth century. His central thesis is that Christ is the manifestation of God's love, which in turn calls forth our love for God. Christ's work is not directed toward a victory over the devil or the satisfaction of God; its concern is with man, to win man back to God by revealing God's love for man.

The Meaning of Christ for Salvation

In attempting a constructive statement of the meaning of Christ for salvation we must summarize certain conclusions already reached. (1) Salvation is the inclusive Christian word for God's total work in giving life to man. Thus it includes individual and social aspects, victory over evil and gift of good, the movement of history and a present salvation, this world and the life to come. (2) This work of God is one, and Christ has his significance for every aspect of it: for forgiveness and the creation of the new life in men, for the movement in history and the final consummation. (3) Christ's work must be looked at as a unitary whole, and we must see the whole Christ as having meaning for that work. (4) Always Christ's work is the work of God—"God was in Christ." (5) Salvation is God's deed and gift, not man's achieve-

ment. But God's work is ethical-personal, God's gift and man's response: so in the Incarnation, so in our experience of salvation.

Keeping in mind that this work is one, we may now look at its different aspects, summarizing the Christian conception of salvation.

1. Christ is Savior because he is revealer, and first of God. Man must know God if he is to be saved. That is more than belief in God or knowledge about God; it is seeing God, hearing him speak to us, knowing what he is and what he asks. The New Testament has little if any theory of the Incarnation, but the fact itself is vital for its faith: "*God* was in Christ." In him God and man were one. There is nothing here about substance and essence, about *hypostasis* and *ousia*. It is personal, not abstract. The disciples saw a life wholly given to God, the life of the man Jesus. They saw the living God, the God of truth and love, ruling that life, speaking through it, acting in it. Here was truth in life, the Word become flesh, the life which was "the light of men." This life which was revelation includes the teaching of Jesus, his deed of service consummated in death, and back of all his spirit of love which was God's Spirit in him. To see this love, to answer it, to receive it, to live it, this is to be saved; and first it is necessary to see it. With this revelation of God there is also given the revelation of man, of what man is as seen in the light of God, of what he should be and may become. In his own spirit and life Christ revealed the true nature of man.

2. Christ's saving work was one of reconciliation. The term is a better one than the word atonement because the latter has been so much a center of controversy and misunderstanding. Of like meaning, and more often used in the New Testament, is the word forgiveness. What was Jesus' part in this? Was his death needed for this?

We need first to realize that Jesus' task was not that of reconciling God to man; it was man that needed to be reconciled, and it was God who in Christ was the reconciler. But that is not to view forgiveness or reconciliation lightly. Salvation is through union

with God. Sin divides. It is more than a matter of debts to be paid or deeds demanding punishment. It is the wrong spirit and life in man, the mighty and destructive power which we see at work in the world today. Ignorance, indifference, folly, selfishness, greed, lust, blindness, and unbelief—sin is all this and more. Reconciliation is always of two. Man had to be brought to see God in his holiness and love, to see himself in his sin and need, to see the new life that was offered him, to give himself utterly in the radical revolution that was demanded. This is what Christ has done and is doing today. And with this reconciliation of God and man goes the reconciliation of man and man whose need we see today as never before. This is not sentimental but positive, creative, breaking down age-old barriers, joining men in understanding, faith, justice, good will, and common effort.

3. The work of Christ is one of conflict. He is *Christus victor.* He won the victory in his own life by utter trust in God and obedience to his will. He points that way to us if we would have victory over sin and peace of soul. He won out over his foes, not by summoning twelve legions of angels, but by answering their hate with love. In that spirit he calls to us: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And he gives us the weapons of faith and truth and love which are needed for victory.

4. The saving work of Christ is creative. Speculative theology has elaborated on John 1:3 ("All things were made through him") and built up a doctrine of cosmic creation through the Logos, or second person of the Trinity. That is not our concern here, nor is it that of the New Testament. John's own interest is clear: "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (1:17). Paul is clear in his great emphasis. There is conflict and victory over evil, but the goal is a new creation: new men in a new world. There is, of course, a cosmic reference here. The goal of creation, revealed in Christ, was present in the beginning. Christ is the revealer of the creator God and his purpose as he is of the redeemer God and his end.

5. For us, as for the first disciples, the death of Christ is central in his work. It brought a revolutionary change in the faith of

Jesus' followers. Before that he was to them the coming messianic conqueror of traditional belief. His teaching and the course of his life had, indeed, pointed another way, the way which he took, not without struggle, but with clearness of conviction. His death of shame at the hand of his foes scattered his followers and destroyed their hope (Luke 24:21). Then there came the new vision of the Christian faith and way. Since then the cross has been the supreme symbol of Christianity and the epitome of its message.

The death of Christ is (1) the revelation of what sin is and does, and of God's judgment upon it. It was not the deed of a few diabolical spirits, but rather the fruit of what we find all about us today and in ourselves. Ambitious leaders fearful of their position, a sovereign state that put first its own power and rule, timid followers who withdrew at sight of danger, and more than all else the multitudes, the people of the rank and file, careless, blind or indifferent to great issues and a great summons, these brought his death. It is (2) the supreme revelation of God as it was the final and supreme expression of the spirit of Jesus. God is love, love unmeasured and undeserved, love that suffers and that gives. (3) It sets forth the way of God for the salvation of his world and the establishment of his rule: "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zec. 4:6). In it that Spirit is revealed as suffering, forgiving, reconciling love. The gospel is the summons to receive this love and to follow this way.

6. It is the work of Christ to create unity and in so doing to overcome evil and create life. Here the deepest meaning of his work comes to expression and its other aspects are gathered together. Incarnation, reconciliation, vicarious suffering, all enter in. Here comes first Christ's own union with God, by which all his work was made possible; because the Son was one with the Father, the Father could work through the Son. With this there went his union with man. The theology of the early Church sought to express this in its doctrine of the two "natures" in the one person, and of the "assumption" of our "humanity" by the Son, abstract terms in which the vital, personal, and ethical meaning tends to be lost. What the New Testament shows us is one who joined himself

to men in love, who made their sorrows and needs his own, who bore their sins in life and death, who confessed for them their sins and bore the consequences of those sins that the chastisement of our peace might be upon him and that by his stripes we might be healed. And all this was that he might unite men with God and in turn with one another in a new humanity.

It is not easy to express this truth. Men have attempted it in metaphysical, in legalistic, and in mystical terms. The reality is there, whatever the form of thought. In Christ the God of love was joined to man in a life of love. In that love Christ was joined to the life of man. Through it he has united men with God. And this is the victory that shall yet overcome the world: our faith in the God of love and the life of love as brought to us in Christ. This is the meaning of vicarious suffering, of the idea of substitution, of the declaration that "God became man in order that man might become God."

It is significant that the deeper truths about Christ's work and our faith have been mainly set forth in symbol and analogy, alike in the New Testament and in the literature of worship. And sometimes the poets have grasped what has been hidden from others. So in *The Last Voyage*, by Alfred Noyes:

> Did his creation, then, involve descent,
> Renunciation, sacrifice in heaven,
> A Calvary at the inmost heart of things,
> Wherein the eternal Passion still enacts
> In an eternal world what mortal eyes
> Saw dimly on one shadowy hill of time? [5]

And this is from the *Jerusalem* of William Blake, the poet mystic:

> Wouldest thou love one who never died
> For thee, or ever die for one who had not died for thee?

[5] By permission of the publishers, J. B. Lippincott Company, from "The Last Voyage" in *Collected Poems in One Volume* by Alfred Noyes. Copyright, 1922, 1947, by Alfred Noyes.

And if God dieth not for Man and giveth not himself
Eternally for Man, Man could not exist; for Man is Love
And God is Love: every kindness to another is a little Death
In the Divine Image, nor can Man exist but by Brotherhood.

Toyohiko Kagawa's word is marked equally by social passion and religious faith, as may be noted in his *Meditations on the Cross*:

Without awakening to this full Cross-consciousness,
The social revolution is absolutely futile.
. . . . . .
It is the adventure of ultimate Love;
It is the consummate Art of the Universe.
. . . . . .
The Cross is
The whole of Christ, the whole of Love.
God speaks to man through the Cross
Of Love's mysteries concealed in the Divine Bosom.
. . . . . .
Those who have no Love of humanity
Have no way of knowing the Love of God;
. . . . . .
Without the Cross there is no victory.[6]

Interesting, finally, is the comment of the Hindu philosopher S. Radhakrishnan, writing in *East and West in Religion:*

The mystery of life is creative sacrifice. It is the central idea of the Cross, which was such a scandal to the Jews and the Greeks, that he who truly loves us will have to suffer for us, even to the point of death. . . . The Cross signifies that evil, in the hour of its supreme triumph, suffers its decisive defeat by the force of patient love and suffering.

[6] Used by permission of Harper & Brothers.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE REMAKING OF MAN

SALVATION MEANS NEW MEN IN A NEW WORLD. THE DOMINANT HOPE OF ISRAEL WAS THAT OF A NEW WORLD, A WORLD in which her foes would be overthrown, in which God's rule would come bringing justice and righteousness and peace. Jesus began his preaching with the word: "The kingdom of God is at hand"; but he saw that the coming of the kingdom required a new spirit in men. Beginning with the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount portrays the new world in terms of the spirit and character of those who belong to it. The rule of God means a new life in men.

Man's Making and Remaking

The hope of a coming new world remained vivid in the early church, but increasingly it was realized that the salvation of God meant the making of new men. And this salvation did not lie in the future. Here and now, in forgiveness and reconciliation, through the Holy Spirit given to men, in the reality and power of a new life, God was making men over. Here were new men, and for them there was already a new world. "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17. Cf. Matt. 5:3-9, 45; 18:3; John 1:12-13; 3:3-5). Indeed, there were those under the old covenant who had seen that the new world meant new men with a new spirit. So Jeremiah proclaims the new covenant when God will write his law in human hearts. And in Ezekiel we read: "I will . . . put a new spirit

within them." A new heart I will give you" (11:19; 36:26; Jer. 31:33-34).

Man needs remaking. The individual enters life as a child. He is here to be made a man. He must gain insight and understanding, the knowledge of God and truth and righteousness, the mastery of himself and his world in the freedom which God gives. But he may deny his calling. He may refuse to grow up. He may choose evil instead of God and the good, and sink to the level of the beast—and lower. He becomes a slave of the evil which he has chosen. He needs more than growing up, more than reform; he must be made over from within. The problem is heightened, though it is not altered, when we look beyond the individual. For no man is merely an individual. He comes into the world with a heredity of impulse and instinct waiting for expression. His environment shapes and molds him from his first days. The basic fact remains: whether we go back to a primal fall and resultant corruption, to social environment or to individual decision, man is sinful in spirit and life and needs remaking.

Two convictions have marked Christian thought in this matter: first, that such change is needed; second, that it comes from God. But there have been widely different views as to the nature of this change and as to the way in which it is achieved. Among the terms used to describe the former are conversion, rebirth (regeneration), growing up (maturity), sanctification, perfection. In connection with the latter the discussion has commonly centered on the work of the Spirit, the means of grace, and the place of the Church.

It is necessary here to distinguish between fact and theory. They are not separable, but here, as elsewhere, the theory or theology may easily limit or obscure the reality instead of interpreting it. The facts are plain. Men can be changed. They must be changed if our world is not to be destroyed. They are being changed, and Christian history is replete with the evidence of changed human lives.

What is it that marks a "new man"? Let us ask first what makes a man. What elements go to constitute a given individual? Many elements enter in: physical constitution, instinct and impulse, self-

consciousness, ability to reflect, freedom to choose, acquired habits of every kind, knowledge, skills, social relations. But the real man is not found until we inquire as to the goals that he sets, the ideals which shape his conduct, the power in which he trusts, and his inner spirit and attitude. This is the real man. And this man can be changed, not just his ideas and activities, but the very core of his being—heart and mind and will. This is regeneration. William James gives abundant illustration of this in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Masefield pictures it simply but vividly in his *Everlasting Mercy*:

> I did not think, I did not strive,
> The deep peace burnt my me alive;
> The bolted door had broken in,
> I knew that I had done with sin.
> I knew that Christ had given me birth
> To brother all the souls of earth.[1]

The important fact is not that of dramatic examples such as Paul and Francis of Assisi but that this has happened through the centuries in countless lives.

Conversion—Regeneration

Conversion has been the common word for this change in evangelical circles. Taken strictly the word means simply a turning, or a turning about, much the same as is suggested by the word "repentance." The text appealed to was Matt. 18:3 (K.J.V.): "Except ye be converted, and become as little children." The newer versions translate this more accurately: "unless you turn." But the Christian meaning of this simple picture, or analogy, is far more than a human decision to reform. Adding another picture, Jesus says you must become like children or "you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." So the use of the word "conversion" in this deeper sense, as employed in the notable works of William James and A. C. Underwood (*Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian*), will doubtless continue.

[1] Copyright 1911 by John Masefield. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

More significant is the picture used in the word "regeneration," or "rebirth." This is the common theological term. It has had a wide use in religion. In the mystery religions we find the phrase *in aeternum renatus*. The classical passage is John 3, which speaks of man being "born anew," or "born of the Spirit." The figure of birth, or rebirth, carries various meanings. (1) Man has a dual nature, body and spirit; he belongs to two worlds. As he is born of the flesh and enters the physical world, so he must be spiritually born and enter the world of the spirit. (2) This second birth is a being "born of the Spirit." We do not simply become aware of this other world; there is a new life given to us, a life from God given by his Spirit, a life of faith in God and fellowship with him, of love and righteousness, of trust and power and peace. (3) This new birth, or new life, means a transformation; it is a re-creation, not merely a creation. This is what regeneration means in common speech. In Paul's words the Christian is "a *new* creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). The Greek word for regeneration, or rebirth (*palingenesia*), occurs but twice in the New Testament. In Tit. 3:5 it is applied to the individual. In Matt. 19:28 Jesus speaks of "the regeneration" in reference to the renewed, or reborn, world whose coming he proclaimed. (So, literally translated, in the K.J.V. and A.S.V. The R.S.V. renders the word "the new world.") The hope is that of "a new heaven and a new earth." The faith is in him who says, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:1, 5).

Sanctification: The Meaning

What is the goal of this remaking? What is the way to its achievement? Can that goal be reached in this life? Sanctification is the term which theology has used to designate this aspect of man's salvation, but it has been discussed under other terms such as holiness, perfection, or maturity.

The New Testament gives a large place to this matter. For Paul sanctification is as vital a doctrine as justification. First in his gospel came God's gracious deed in Christ, offering men forgiveness and

fellowship. Then came the high demand, the ethical note which was as strong with Paul as ever with the prophets or Jesus, holding up no less an ideal than that of life according to the spirit of Christ. Such a demand would mean condemnation and despair if it stood alone, but Paul joined to it the third element: this higher life is God's gift. God makes men over by his Spirit and gives to us the life that he asks.

Protestant theology in the main has not given much attention to the doctrine of sanctification. It reacted against the form which this doctrine had taken in the Roman Catholic Church, with its ideas of saints and sainthood. Equally it feared the teaching of those Protestant groups which stressed a special experience of sanctification, commonly with a strong emphasis on the subjective and emotional. The Methodist movement in its beginnings paid special attention to this theme. Wesley was strongly influenced by Luther, especially by the commentary on Romans; yet he noted at the same time Luther's neglect of this Christian teaching. He found himself indebted to the smaller groups, but he was saved from their excesses by his insistence upon the ethical test as applied to any experience of sanctification. The Methodism of today in the main shares with other Protestant bodies in the neglect of this doctrine.

There are, however, marks of an increased attention to this matter. It is seen in the persistence within the churches of groups and special movements concerned with the question of a deeper and richer Christian experience. Even more important is the realization that if the Church is to be a real power in the pagan world, there must be more than correct teaching, growth in numbers, or social zeal. It must have more moral-spiritual power in its membership, a greater spiritual dynamic, and reveal a more obvious difference between the avowed followers of Christ and those who make no such claim.

The word sanctification has a double meaning, that of dedication and of transformation, of belonging and of being made over. Our primary concern here is with the second meaning. It may be defined as that making holy of the Christian believer by which he is

freed from sin and enabled in inner spirit and in outward conduct to realize the will of God in his life. The alternative term is holiness. We have two groups of English words here: holy, holiness, hallow, hallowed; and saints, sanctification, consecration. Both groups stem from the same original, the Hebrew *kadash* and the Greek *hagiadzo*.

Rudolf Otto has pointed out how basic the idea of the holy is in religion, alike in its lower and its highest forms.[2] The Holy refers primarily to God. Religion rests on the belief in a holy, or numinous, being. Common to all its forms is the idea of a transcendent power. To sanctify God, in Old Testament phrase, is to recognize his supreme and absolute claim upon man, to ascribe to him all honor and glory, to bow in awe and reverence before him. Significant is the way in which, while the primary meaning of power and mystery remains, the rational and ethical are added. Other religions had the idea of a transcendent (holy) Being. What marks the Old Testament prophetic faith is the way in which the transcendent God of majesty and might and righteousness is equally marked by goodness and mercy. The God who is far, before whom men are to bow in reverence and awe, is the God who draws near in mercy, the God whom men are to love and trust. Such passages as Isa. 40; 55:6-9; Psalms 90, 103, show how these two aspects are joined. So in the Lord's Prayer: God is the *Father* who forgives men and cares for them; he is the Father *in heaven* whose name is to be hallowed (held holy), whose will is to be done. It is the paradox of the God who dwells in the high and holy place but also with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit, who smites and heals, who is wroth with man's sin but who also restores and gives peace.

The idea of holiness in man is derived and secondary. It varies with the concept of the holiness of God. Where the holiness of God is conceived in terms of majesty and sovereignty, there holiness in man means primarily dedication or belonging. The ethical aspect is not essential. Hence holiness may belong to things as well as persons. Thus Israel is a holy people, as chosen by God for him-

[2] In his *Das Heilige;* English title, *The Idea of the Holy.*

self. The priesthood is holy in a special sense. But the land is holy as well, as are the temple and its vessels, the garments of the priests, the Sabbath and various other days, the tithe, and the first-born of man and of the flocks.

This meaning of belonging is retained on the higher levels of religion. In the New Testament the followers of Christ are called saints, or holy ones (*hagioi*). They are those who are surrendered, dedicated, or consecrated. This is the primary meaning of holy as applied to the Church ("the holy catholic Church"); it is a fellowship, or a communion, of saints, or holy ones, of those who belong to God by deed and confession.

This may be called the formal aspect of holiness, but it gains a rich and positive content as soon as God's holiness is seen to be that of goodness as well as power. Holiness is still devotion, but it is more than a giving of tithes or a hallowing of days. It is loving God with heart and mind and soul and strength. So there appears the second meaning of holiness in man: a belonging which means vital union, a union which brings transforming power, a holiness which means likeness of spirit with God. The Old Testament speaks of the children of Israel as children of God, sons and daughters of Jehovah, called forth and cared for by his love (Hos. 1:10; Isa. 43:6). The New Testament uses the same figure, but now it means likeness in character and life. "Love, . . . so that you may be sons of your Father. . . . You . . . must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:43-48). Belonging means no longer merely possession by God and privilege for man. Holiness means an inner belonging, a belonging in heart and mind and will by which man is made over into God's likeness.

How then is this transformation brought to pass? How are we to be made over or, to use Jesus' daring word, to become perfect as God is perfect?

Sanctification: The Way

The goal of the Christian life is to be freed from the domination of sin and to be made over in the spirit of Christ, to become sons of

God not only by his forgiving mercy but by his redeeming and re-creating Spirit. Two facts must first be faced. Man is finite, sinful, and enmeshed in a sinful world; God is the Holy One, transcendent in power and righteousness. But if we stop here, as some incline to do in their stress on the wholly other God, we shall miss something that is at the very heart of the gospel. The holy God is a God of love who draws near not only to forgive but to receive into saving fellowship. The God who is other is not totally other; God and man are akin, so a saving fellowship and a true sonship are possible. The New Testament is equally insistent upon our duty to pursue this high goal and upon God's gracious will to give us this life.

What then is the way to its attainment? All are agreed that it is God's deed; the question is as to how God works. The problems involved are the same as those considered in the preceding study of salvation.

The Roman Catholic Church stands for the thoroughgoing sacramentarian position. Through the sacraments grace is infused into the soul. This "effects at once the remission of original and mortal sin, and inaugurates the condition or state of holiness." "Justification consists of an actual obliteration of sin and an interior sanctification." [3] Here, as elsewhere in Roman Catholic teaching, the divine grace which brings the new life is thought of in terms of substance, in a metaphysical manner.

It was the work of the Reformation to restore the place of the personal-ethical-spiritual in the conception of religion and of salvation. When a man is justified, he enters into a personal fellowship with God, marked by God's grace and man's responding faith; in that fellowship he receives God's Spirit and a new life. Sanctification is thus the fruit of justification.

The Reformers, however, paid little attention to the doctrine of sanctification or to the development of this higher life—that is, to sanctification in personal experience. Their interest was in God's grace as forgiving mercy (justification) rather than as enabling and

[3] *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, VI, 706, 701.

transforming power. This latter was the special concern of certain smaller circles, pietistic groups within the Church or independent bodies like the Moravians. In this concern the Methodist movement shared, especially in its beginnings. Wesley called for a renewal of the New Testament type of religion with the stress on a conscious personal experience of fellowship with God and of the presence and work of his Spirit. He wanted more than doctrinal definitions or a sharing in the rites of the Church. He pointed to the New Testament insistence upon our being perfect as God is perfect, being sanctified wholly, "filled with all the fullness of God." He summoned men to press on toward this higher level of the Christian life. But his special stress was on the work of the Spirit. God gives what he demands. What he asks is entire freedom from sin and a life that shall be perfect in love, and this he accomplishes in us through the work of the Spirit.

The strength of Wesley's position was in his union of the ethical with this insistence on the divine deed. The gift is of God, but what he gives is deliverance from sin and a life of love. This position, evangelical and ethical, was not consistently carried through; and Wesley's limitations here became more pronounced in some of his followers. Influenced by traditional forms of conceiving original sin, they declared that sin in man could be extirpated completely by a single act of the Spirit. Such biblical figures as washing, burning, and uprooting were literalized and absolutized. Here was the error of the metaphysical or material in the conception of sin and of the mechanical in the idea of the work of the Siprit. So there was the idea of attainable perfection in this life and too often the negative stress on the absence of sin and even of temptation, since evil within had been removed. Wesley did not make this claim for himself, and he insisted upon a growth in perfection. A common defect, extending far beyond all these groups, was the method of settling questions by citing biblical texts, treating them literally, and absolutizing their meaning. Thus Wesley cites the prayer, "Deliver us from evil," and the prophetic word, "He shall redeem

Israel from all his iniquities," as proof of his doctrine. The basic weakness, however, lay in the failure to distinguish between the "what" and the "how" of sanctification. It is clear that God purposes to redeem us from evil and to give us a life of righteousness and love; that is the simple meaning of salvation. How he does this is a further question.

Sanctification is not a separate deed or experience. There is no salvation, no Christian life which does not involve deliverance from sin and the attainment of holiness in spirit and life. There is no justification which does not include sanctification, as Luther rightly insisted; for justification implies the turning from sin, the yielding to God in surrender and trust, the opening of the life to God, and the beginning of a living fellowship in which God gives his saving help. Sanctification is no one-time event. It is no "thing" bestowed upon us once for all. It is no "state" in which, once attained, we may rest satisfied. It is something given and yet waiting to be achieved. There is a "mature manhood" which we are to attain. We are no longer to "be children," but are "to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:13-15; cf. Phil. 3:12-16).

As to the way, the basic aspects have already been considered in our study of salvation.

1. Man must turn from evil and set his heart and mind and will upon God and the good. This is the meaning of repentance, of conversion in its primary sense of "turning," and of faith as supreme trust and total surrender. It may occur at some decisive moment, as with the twice-born men of whom William James writes. So Francis of Assisi turned from his home of wealth, discarding the very garments that he wore. So Paul looked back to the hour when Christ spoke to him on the Damascus road. Yet even here it is no matter of a single act. Every day man must say "No" to the old and "Yes" to the new. And this clearly obtains with those who are nurtured from childhood in the Christian way. Such a life is not free from times of crisis and decision, nor from

experiences of wrongdoing and the need of repentance and renewed devotion.

2. We are made new men by coming into life-giving fellowship with God, by receiving from him the new spirit and the new life. The new man becomes such by being born into a new world, the world of the Spirit. To this world and its realities his whole life is now oriented. He looks at the "things that are unseen"; he walks in the presence of the Eternal; a new loyalty determines his life. But there is more than vision and obedience: the life, the spirit, the power, of this new world are given to him; and these become his true being and life. "We all, . . . beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness . . . ; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

3. There is something divine here, but nothing magical or mysterious. We may not be able to explain it, but the experience is open to everyone. When we open our life to God in faith and fellowship, he enters and makes it over. There are analogies for this, beginning with the level of the physical. All life depends upon the capacity of the living organism to take that which is not itself—food, drink, air, sunshine—and have it made over into its own life and being. On a higher level, in personal fellowship, it is possible for one person to enter into the life of another, for one to receive from others that which goes to make his inmost personal being: ideas and ideals, spirit and attitude, goals and loyalties. So in richer and deeper fashion the God who made us can give to us, not simply physical existence, but the inner life of truth and love and righteousness, of strength and peace. More than the closest of friends he by his Spirit can enter into our life when we really open the door to him.

4. This life-giving and remaking has its conditions. It comes in and through personal relations—between God and man, between man and his fellows (in the home, in the Church, elsewhere). It is ethical: it depends upon our understanding and response. It is not something magical. It is not by a deed of sheer power, as has

been sometimes conceived in teachings about grace and the Spirit. Its beginning is our response as God speaks to us. That may be very simple, almost unnoticed, as with the little child in the Christian home. But with the mature person as with the child it involves continuance as well as beginning. We "are *being changed* into his likeness."

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE WAYS OF HELP

A TWOFOLD CONVICTION UNDERLIES THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF SALVATION: FIRST, THAT THE GOD OF LOVE FORGIVES MEN and receives them into fellowship; second, that God gives to men the life which he asks of them.

It is to the second question that we now turn. How deeply important it is should be evident. A real salvation must be a continuing salvation. Day by day we must receive from God the life that we need: courage, strength, endurance, the hunger and thirst for righteousness, the spirit of love for our life with men, the sense of God and the practice of fellowship with him. It is not enough to hold up the ideal and to bid men follow the way; we must show them how they may find this help of God, how they may receive the life which they are to live. The Christian life has its law, an order of God as clear and sure as the laws of nature. That law, or order, has a double aspect as related to our deeds and to God's gifts. There is a moral order for us to follow in our conduct, and there is an order of God's giving which we must know and follow if we are to receive grace from him. So we must ask as to the means of grace, or, more broadly, the ways in which God's help comes to man.

The Means of Grace

In the main, Protestant theology has concerned itself here with general principles. Roman Catholicism, with its doctrine of Church and priesthood, of penance and sacraments, has been much more

specific. So in a very different way have the pietistic groups, stressing personal experience, the work of the Spirit, and specific "means of grace." Neglect here may be the reason why our churches, commonly correct in doctrine, right in ethical ideals, and with effective organization, are so often lacking in a depth of religious life which should distinguish those who have found the Christian way. We need to be clear about our basic principles here, but we need also to make plain the concrete ways in which salvation becomes effective in life, or, in other words, how God enters our life as saving presence and power.

The question has commonly been considered under the term "means of grace." As suggested earlier, the word grace has a twofold meaning. It denotes, first, what God is, the character of God as love, and particularly his attitude of mercy toward men. Second, it indicates what God gives to us, the inner spirit and enabling help by which man can live as a child of God. The latter is based upon the former and upon the conviction that all our life is from God. We need to note the wide scope of this question as well as its vital significance. The themes of prayer, worship, the Church, the sacraments, the work of the Spirit all belong here, as well as the significance of the common life as at once a sphere of God's service and a means of growth in grace. And back of all these is the question as to how we are to join man's moral freedom and responsibility with this dependence upon the help of God.

Christian thought in general agrees that God is the God of grace and that he gives the grace, or help, by which men live. But when it comes to the specific ways in which God bestows this grace, there are wide differences. These rest upon the varying conceptions of the nature of the Christian life, of salvation, and of God's way of working with man and in man. They have appeared in our study of salvation and need only brief reference here. As chief traditional forms we may note mysticism, sacramentarianism, and the idea of grace as power bestowed by direct action of the sovereign God.

In its broadest meaning mysticism is the immediate feeling-

awareness of God—what Rudolf Otto describes as the sense of the numinous, or the holy. As such it belongs to Christianity. God is more than an idea to be apprehended or an authority to be obeyed; infinitely above us, he is yet a presence with us, one whom we may know in direct personal communion. Our concern here is with extreme, or absolute, mysticism. Here the emphasis on the human side is on feeling-awareness rather than on the ethical-personal relation. God is conceived in terms of spiritual essence or substance.[1] The I-Thou relation retreats in favor of an impersonal sharing in the divine, a union in which the self is merged in the divine substance. Mysticism is right in its search for oneness with God and its protest against separateness, self-sufficiency, and self-centeredness. Extreme mysticism fails to see that this union is to be one of persons, that dependence upon God and utter devotion to his will mean the true and full achievement of the personal self and not its loss.

The sacraments have their place in Christianity as a means of grace and will be considered later. Here our concern is with sacramentarianism, the special theory of the sacraments which is best exemplified in the Roman Catholic Church and is tied up with its doctrine of the Church and the priesthood. Here again the personal and ethical fail to come to their own. Sacramental grace does not depend upon man's answer of repentance and faith to God's gift of mercy and help. The sacraments operate of necessity, directly, *ex opere operato,* depending upon the legally established institution and priesthood. The divine grace itself, thus mediated, appears as divine substance rather than as a personal-spiritul reality. The error is not in the idea that the sincere worshiper sharing in the mass receives inspiration and aid; it is that

[1] The notable mystical work *Theologia Germanica,* to which Luther confessed his great indebtedness, moves close to this impersonal concept at times, as when it speaks of "the One who is neither I nor Thou, this nor that, but is above all I and Thou, this and that." Yet the author guards himself at the crucial point when he says, "All thought of self, all self-seeking, self-will, . . . must be utterly lost, . . . except in so far as they are necessary to make up a person." Ch. XLIII.

the essential factor is here conceived instrumentally as ecclesiastical-sacerdotal, and in its operation as mechanical-magical.[2]

A third conception as to how God brings his grace to man may be called that of direct action. It is expressed in most consistent and thoroughgoing fashion in Calvin's *Institutes* and follows from his total view of God and man. Dominant in the conception of God is his sovereignty, and no seeming contradiction with the ethical is allowed to alter this. What he does is right because he does it. Salvation is directly and wholly the action of God. Man is totally depraved; he has lost wholly the image of God in which he was made and has in himself no power to perceive or respond. It follows then, alike from the nature of God and of man, not simply that all is of God, but that God's action is directly and absolutely determinative. Here the personal gives way to the mechanical. In effect man is not a person, apprehending with his mind, responding in free choice; rather he is an object acted upon.

Calvin does not shrink from the implications of this position. If men are saved, it is because God has so determined; if they are damned, this too is in accordance with God's decision. Anything else, in Calvin's thought, would infringe on God's absolute sovereignty. The idea of grace remains, though his grace is not the all-encompassing love of Jesus' teaching. Man's salvation is the gracious act of God, but the operation of grace is in principle nonethical and impersonal as in sacramentarianism. It differs in that it is mechanical and not magical or mystical. God has determined from all ages, and without regard to their character or response, who is to be saved. This concept of grace as independent of free personal response and irresistible in its operation can only be described as mechanical. So in the Westminster Confession we read how God "effectually" calls the elect and how man "is altogether passive therein." [3]

[2] Dean Inge calls this "a pharmacological superstition, . . . as if the consecrated elements externally introduced an incorruptible substance into our bodies." *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 78.

[3] For an effective criticism of this theory as well as an able discussion of our general theme see John Oman, *Grace and Personality*.

The ways of help by which God gives life to men rest upon the basic principles underlying the whole concept of salvation. (1) God is personal being; in his infinite mercy he receives man into a life of personal fellowship. (2) God asks of men a life of love and righteousness, and what he asks he gives. God's grace is no mysterious substance or magical power, but his own life, his own Spirit: truth and love and goodness. (3) Life like this, personal and ethical, can be given only in personal-ethical manner, in and through fellowship with himself. (4) A personal relation is always mutual. It is a man answering God, not simply God speaking to man. Faith perceives when God reveals himself; love responds to his love. Faith and love come, indeed, from God; but the response is the free answer of person to Person, not the behavior of a thing moved upon by power, itself passive and inert. (5) The means of grace are as wide as life itself. All life should be sacramental. Offered to God in faith and obedience, it becomes the means which God uses to give life to men. Life itself is a means of grace, the door through which God comes to us with his gifts. (6) Not all means of grace are on the same level. The witness of the saints and the experience of the ages point us to ways of help which have special power to mediate to us the living God.

The Way of Prayer and Worship

The heart of religion is fellowship with God in obedience and trust; in and through this fellowship God gives himself to men. That is why prayer is so important as a means of grace. Prayer is fellowship with God coming to conscious expression. All religion involves a double movement: God coming to man, man responding to God. Only thus is man's vital union with God established. But if the fellowship is to be real and vital, if the union with God is to be carried into all man's life, then there must be this core of consciously and purposely practiced communion which we call prayer.

Prayer seems very simple; so, indeed, it is. It is the child looking up and saying "Father." Yet viewed aright, it is the highest achieve-

ment of man, demanding the whole man and calling on all his powers. Heart and mind and will, holy imagination and spiritual insight, supreme desire persistently held, and back of all the venture of faith, all these enter in. And this is clear when we see what Christian prayer comprises.

Prayer is, first of all, the soul's turning to God and waiting upon him that it may see him and know him. The world of the visible is always with us, pressing upon our attention, demanding our action. The secular mood tends to engulf our thought and life and to shut out the world of the spirit. If we are to know that world, then we must deliberately look at the things that are unseen and eternal. God, indeed, is always with us; "closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." But to know him in his beauty and truth, his goodness and power and holiness, this means more than casual thought or the speaking of his name. There must be quiet of soul, aspiration of heart, meditation, devotion of will. This is the meaning of prayer, not as petition absorbed in self, but as reverent worship, an offering of self, a waiting upon God, that we may know him and hear him speak to us.

And here the significance of common worship is seen, with the needed help that it brings to our dull and ofttimes laggard spirits. The quickening fellowship, the union of heart and voice in prayer and praise, the truth that comes through Scripture and sermon, the atmosphere of quiet and reverence, all these help us to see the Lord, high and lifted up, and to draw near to him. Private prayer and common worship are the open door through which we enter the presence of God and through which he can enter our hearts and lives.

Prayer is the bringing of man to God as well as of God to man. Prayer is not first of all the outstretched hand waiting to receive, but rather the bowed heart, the penitent spirit, the recognition of God's claim, the surrender of life. Religion is born when man meets that which is higher than himself and bows before the Holy One. To this God as seen in Christ man brings himself and all his life. In confession and repentance he brings his sins and failures. He sees

all the good that has come to him and brings his thanksgiving. He owns God as Lord and offers himself in service. He entrusts to God his needs and cares and seeks from God the grace to live. Seeing all in the light of God, he gains the vision of the true values of life and affirms his devotion to them as life's true goal and first concern.[4]

So far we have considered prayer as communion and worship. In common thought prayer is first of all petition. This is its literal meaning: to pray is to ask, especially to ask earnestly, to ask God. And petition has its place in Christian prayer. There is a double drive in prayer: first, our awareness of God, of the Holy One before whom we bow, of the God of power and goodness with whom there is help; second, the sense of dependence and impelling need. Rightly, worship and devotion come first: we look up to the Father in heaven; we pray that his name be hallowed, his will be done. But the petitions follow. They may be selfish; that is excluded if we begin as Jesus taught us. They may be foolish, as when we ask for wrong things, or superstitious, as when men think that there is some God-compelling power in insistent and heaped-up phrases.

But petition has its place in prayer and a vital one. True, there is a divine giving which does not wait upon man's asking: God sends his rain on the just and the unjust. But God's highest gifts wait upon the devotion and desire of man. There is a blessing that belongs to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Jesus exhorts men to ask, to seek, to knock at God's door. The way to life is through a narrow gate, the gate of decision and desire. Prayer is "dominant desire." The fault lies in wrong asking and half-hearted seeking. The province of Christian petition is first of all spiritual,

[4] This double aspect of prayer is well put by Paul Sabatier in his *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*. "To pray is to talk with God, to lift ourselves up to him, to converse with him that he may come down to us. It is an act of meditation, of reflection, which presupposes the effort of all that is most personal in us. With St. Francis as with Jesus, prayer has this character of effort which makes it the greatest moral act. For him as for his Master the end of prayer is communion with the heavenly Father, the accord of the divine with the human. But it is not without difficulty that the soul unites itself with God, or, if one prefers, that it finds itself. A prayer ends at last in divine communion only when it began by a struggle." Pp. 187, 188, *passim*.

the higher goods of life; and it is here that Jesus summons us to earnest and persistent search and asking.

But this does not exclude what we call the natural world: bread, health, safety, daily work, material goods, all belong in our praying. Man's life is one—body and spirit. All comes from God; all belongs to him: in it all we serve him, and for it all we may have his help. There are Christian demands to be met here: "Do not be anxious." "Your heavenly Father knows." "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:31, 32, 33). Right prayer is not demand but trust. Prayer is the expression alike of need and of confidence. Because the children are sure of the Father's love, they bring all their needs and concerns to him. That is a real part of the Christian's communion with God. But because they trust that love, they pray first, "Thy will be done," knowing that the will of God means the highest good for man's life. So the way of Christian petition may be summed up in a triple rule: bring all things to God; leave all things with God; in all things trust God.

There remains the question as to whether prayer makes any real difference in what happens in our world. Is not the physical universe wholly under the reign of law? This raises the question as to how we are to conceive God's relation to his world. Only brief comment can be made here. (1) The world is not external to God: its order expresses his reason; its forces have their being in him. (2) The order of nature is not a barrier to man's control but makes that control possible. Shall we think of the immanent, all-sustaining God as having less control of nature than man has? (3) The world of order is a single world and its order includes spiritual as well as natural forces. Human experience shows how these forces influence each other. We know how powerfully mental-emotional states may operate through the endocrine glands and what healing effects upon the body may be wrought by right attitudes of spirit.[5] The Christian believes that Spirit is the supreme reality and the controlling power in the world. But while we believe that all is in God's power, and while we bring all these concerns to God, it is

[5] See Alexis Carrel, *Man the Unknown*, ch. IX.

to his wisdom and good will that we must leave all decision, recognizing that our individual need must find its place in his larger order and purpose.

The Way of the Word

Central among the means of grace is the Word. Our God is a God who speaks. He has spoken in the historic revelation to which the Scriptures witness. He speaks to us today. Our religion is our answer to the God who speaks. And mind must answer here as well as heart and will. God asks no blind obedience but insight and understanding. And this applies not merely to the beginning of the Christian life but to its continuance and growth. If that life is to be more than unthinking emotion, passive submission, or a routine of rules and ritual, then we must love the Lord our God with all our mind as well as with heart and soul and strength. Only so can God enter our life with all the richness of meaning that he should have for us. So the Word becomes a vital means of grace, the word of truth which God speaks and our response in insight, understanding, faith, meditation, and study.

By the Word we mean here not only the Bible but every word or way by which the living God makes known his living presence and his saving truth. That includes the historical revelation, consummated in Christ who is for us "the Word" and brought to us in the Bible to which we give the same name. In New Testament usage the Word meant the gospel message. For us it means all these: the Bible, Christ, and the preaching, or proclamation, in which the message is brought to men. It was one of the great services of the Reformation to restore to a central place not just the Bible but the preaching in which the gospel was proclaimed. With this went the assertion that each man for himself might read the Scripture and hear God speak, that each man might come directly to God and know him, and that every man, layman or priest, might bring the Word to others—all of which belongs to the full meaning of "the priesthood of all believers."

While the Word in the supreme sense is found in the historic

revelation, there are other ways in which the truth of God comes to us. Whatever brings insight into God's ways, whatever makes clear the ideals and ways of Christian living, whatever widens our horizon, strengthens our faith, quickens imagination, and makes us more deeply aware of God, this is truth from God and a means of grace. A wide range is thus indicated for Christian reading and meditation: books which present the Bible and the Christian faith, books of devotion, as well as books of biography, history, poetry. But the way of truth becomes a means of grace for us only as we bring an open mind, a deep desire for God and his truth, the needed time for meditation and prayer, and a spirit of obedience ready to follow when the way is clear.

The Common Life as a Means of Grace

The common life is one of the chief means of grace. By this we mean life in its everyday aspects: the world of nature with its order and beauty, with its demands and its gifts; the world of our fellows, with the manifold relations of home, friendship, community, and nation; the world of work and material goods; the personal life with its temptations and struggles, its doubts and fears, its joys and satisfactions. Christian thought has treated this life in its study of ethics. Its wiser leaders have repudiated the division of man's world into sacred and secular, as did Luther, asserting that God is the Lord of all life and that all right action is served of God.[6] But traditional theology has in general failed to include this world in its doctrine of salvation. Meanwhile there is a rapidly multiplying literature which deals with these matters from the psychological, ethical, and religious viewpoints.

The basic Christian principles which we have been following make clear the meaning of the common life as a means of grace as well as a way of duty. Prayer, worship, the sacraments, meditation have their special place; but we do not leave God's help be-

[6] The influence of the old dualism lives on in the very terms that we employ. Sacred, sanctuary, sacrament, saint, as commonly used, imply that the holy (*sanctus*) is a world apart from the common. The "profane" is that which is outside the temple or sanctuary (*pro* † *fanum*).

hind when we turn to active duty. Fellowship with God should reach out into the "common" life and make this a means of grace. What follows here is not an attempt to cover a field which is as wide as life itself, but simply to indicate concretely how certain major aspects of this common life may be a help in attaining the Christian life as well as the sphere for its expression.

1. The most important means of grace in the common life is human fellowship. Apart from such fellowship there is no *human* living: speech, reason, the arts, science, moral ideals, religious faith, all are achieved only in and with man's relation with fellow man. Such relations are of the most varied character and increase in number and complexity as civilization advances. There are the intimate ones of home and friendship. There are those which unite us in the deepest concerns of life—faith, ideals, devotion. Scientific, political, economic, recreational ties all enter in. At the same time this associated life is the seat of our greatest problems and hindrances. In the individual life it is the occasion of fear, jealousy, suspicion, envy, ill will, hatred. In our social life it brings all these with endless other ills, including war.

This associated life is one of the chief means of grace. It is the place where man may practice fellowship with God and God can enter with his saving help. Not only is his grace needed for this life; it is this life through which he bestows his grace. We all know the central place of fellowship, human as well as divine, in the Lord's Supper and in relation to the Church, which is as such a fellowship, a *communio sanctorum*. Here we apply the principle in the wider sphere.

The Christian answer, alike as to the problem and the opportunities of this associated life, is given primarily in the word love. Here again demand and gift go together. The whole requirement of God, says Jesus, is summed up in the word love—love to God, love to man. Such love is more than sentiment or emotion. It goes beyond the intimate personal relations with which we commonly associate it. It is good will, active and creative, extended to all, near and far, not determined by the worth of its object or by any

response, knowing only that all men are children of God. It is the spirit which we see in Christ, revealing the inmost being of that God who is love. Hence it is only as we have this spirit, as Jesus points out, that we are children of God.

But here is where human fellowship may become a means of grace. God gives us the love which he asks of us. This is nothing less than to give himself to us. God's love is not a substance or a thing which he hands over to us. It is the gift of himself in that fellowship into which he by his mercy receives us. But the gift has its condition: we can have God's love only as we share it with others. That is the very nature of love. It is thus that fellowship becomes a means of grace, and love, our love for fellow men, a sacrament of God. These human relations, with all their problems and difficulties, are thus the means by which God, entering our life, becomes its controlling power, shapes its nature, develops its resources, so that in the practice of this love, as in its receiving, we grow up in him who is our head.

2. If God is to be found in and through all life, then work should be one of the chief sacraments of God since it plays so large a part in human life. That is quite different from the common view, even among Christians. Some, it is true, find satisfaction and joy in their work; but for the mass of men work is too often mere drudgery or at best the condition for gaining the necessities or higher satisfactions of life. Physicians, psychotherapists, and social workers, however, have come to recognize the value of work for a normal life, physically, psychically, morally, and in social adjustment. The harmful effects of idleness are just as apparent, whether seen in the voluntary idleness of the rich or the enforced idleness of the unemployed.

The Christian idea of work roots first of all in our conception of God. We believe in a God who works. "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5:17). Creation and redemption go together and go on continually. That follows from the thought of a living God who is a God of love. Jesus speaks of a God whose work is seen in rising sun and falling showers, in clothing flowers

and feeding birds and giving bread to men, as well as in carrying out his great world purposes. Paul tells the Corinthians that they are the field which God is tilling, the house which he is building (1 Cor. 3:9).

Seen in the light of this God, our work takes a deeper meaning. Honest work, wrought in the right spirit, is service of God and a sharing in his service of men. It is a form of fellowship with God.

Rabindranath Tagore has expressed this in his *Gitanjali:*

> Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!
> He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil! [7]

The great work of God is the carrying out of his purpose of redemption in the overcoming of evil, the establishment of his kingdom, and the creation of a new humanity here on earth. And it is man's high privilege that God has called him to share in this work. "We are fellow workmen" (1 Cor. 3:9), says Paul.

Here comes in the Christian idea of life as a stewardship. God is the householder. Men are the servants to whom he has entrusted his interests. Life is a trust. To this trust belong daily work, material goods, time, talent, influence, all our activities of every kind and all the potentialities that lie within our God-given personal endowment and situation in life.

This daily life is a school for our training and an instrument of God's grace. It may become occasion and means for personal fellowship with God, as Brother Lawrence has shown in his *Practise of the Presence of God.* The daily task becomes for those who seek it a time for daily help. So God bestows his Spirit and creates in us loyalty, patience, integrity, self-mastery, wisdom, and strength, the fruits of his grace. The hours of rest, meditation, and

[7] Copyright 1913 by The Macmillan Company and used by their permission.

worship remain for us a deep need; but we lose their gifts of grace unless we carry them over into this everyday life.

There is, of course, no mechanical or necessary operation of grace in the life of work. It must be work of the right kind, creative and socially useful. There is much work in our modern world which is little more than drudgery, and much that is evil in character, or even destructive in intent and result. And work must be in the right spirit with some vision of its meaning.

3. Joy and pain may be a means of grace. No experiences enter more constantly into our life than these. All life is marked by sensitivity; life is possible only as there is a sensitive awareness of one's world. The basic drives of life are found in the urge to avoid its evils and to seek its satisfactions. That applies to life at its highest as well as at its lower levels, and not least to religion.

In this realm of joy and pain God finds a means of speaking to men and of entering their life. Here, too, man may find means of grace for growth in life. Joy belongs to the Christian life. True, we are called to deny ourselves, but there is also the summons to joy, especially in the psalms and the New Testament. "Rejoice in the Lord." "Taste and see that the Lord is good." "In thy presence there is fullness of joy" (Pss. 33:1; 34:8; 16:11). Paul sees joy as one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and summons the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord" (4:4). And the Fourth Gospel gives Jesus' word: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). Here joy belongs to the very spirit of Christ, and to joy or rejoice is a Christian duty.

Understanding what this Christian joy is, we can see how it becomes a means of grace. Pleasure centers in self; joy requires us to look beyond ourselves. It calls for imagination, vision, faith, appreciation, humble and glad acceptance. It asks for eyes open to the goods of life, to its beauty, its wonders. It centers, above all, in the love of God and his gift in Christ. God calls us to rejoice in his gifts; in the joy which they bring and in our rejoicing God finds a larger entrance and is able to give in larger measure.

Pain and suffering, an inescapable part of life, are also possible means of God's grace and our growth. The saints have always found them a school of the spirit. It is not that suffering necessarily works good. It may, on the contrary, bring bitterness, hardness of heart, or simply destruction of spirit. Nor is it a matter of passive endurance. But rightly met it will bring us higher insights, deeper sympathy and understanding for our fellow men, and a richer experience of God's help. And so we may share in the spirit and life of him who suffered for others, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SYMBOL AND SACRAMENT

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP ARE TWO GREAT WORDS FOR PERSONAL RELIGION: FAITH IN A HIGHER WORLD, UNSEEN BUT real, the world of highest power and of supreme value; fellowship with that world, a living fellowship in which we receive life from this higher source and give to it our life in return. But it is not easy to see this world of the spirit, to live with it and for it and by its power. It is here that symbol and sacrament enter in as means of grace. Their service is fourfold. They help us to see—to apprehend the spiritual in its reality and its meaning. They help us to enter into communion with the unseen God. They serve Christ's followers by aiding them in their common worship and uniting them with the Church of all lands and the Church of the ages. In symbols like that of the cross, and especially in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they bring before us God's redemptive work in the past and our hope for the future.

The Use of Symbol

The use of symbol extends far beyond religion. Wherever man deals with the world of higher meanings and values, he is driven to use the symbolic. He employs the world of sense to set forth what is beyond sense. Painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, all seek through sight and sound to disclose the world of higher meaning and beauty. Action also enters in as seen in drama, in religion, and in social intercourse.

The symbol is especially significant in religion. Here we use the term in its broad sense as including not only objects but actions, words, and narratives of common happenings like the parables of Jesus.[1] The picture form of Jesus' teaching is uniquely significant here. He brought to men the highest truths of God and the loftiest ideals of life, the world to which men are so often blind. But he did this by constant reference to the world about them. Rain and sunshine, birds and flowers, seed and salt and light, men at work and children at play, all these he used to set forth his message. His whole life, indeed, was a visible setting forth in daily action of the deep things of God and man, culminating in the last week with the king entering his city on an ass, the master taking a last meal with his disciples, washing their feet in humble service, solemnly breaking bread and pouring out wine, wearing a crown thrust on him in derision, dying upon a cross between malefactors. Here is truth set forth simply, profoundly, convincingly, bringing vision, moving to repentance and faith. Here in living word and deed is the supreme illustration of the symbol as a means of grace, a way for the bringing of truth and life.

There are wide differences of opinion as to the value of symbol as a means of grace in worship. The symbolic in religion has constantly suffered abuse. As a conveyor of truth it has often been literalized or allegorized. In worship it has led to the idolatry of the object and a mechanical view of the working of grace: so in the use of the cross, of images, of acts and postures, and of special words in prayer. Even the Lord's Prayer may be used in magical and mechanical manner. Hence in large circles, though in varying degree, Protestantism reacted from the use of the symbolic as it did from the special observance of holy days.

But symbolic form or picture speech can never be wholly eliminated from religion. They are the inevitable form of religious thought and speech and devotion. Whether we stand or kneel or prostrate ourselves before God, we seek in posture to express the

[1] It might be noted that the two Greek derivatives, symbol and parable, both use the same verb *ballein*, with similar prepositions, *sun* and *para*, in both cases indicating a bringing together for comparison and suggestion.

attitude of spirit and to gain aid in devotion. So in most churches we rise when we would voice our praise and kneel or bow in prayer. One church may set in central place before the congregation a pulpit with its Bible; another may give that place to cross and communion table or altar. In both cases there is symbolic significance and aid in worship. The cross is the central symbol for Christianity, and those who would not set it up as object use it in hymns of worship.

It remains to note the use of symbol in the language of religion. If God is "the wholly other," then all symbol and analogy would be excluded in setting forth our conception of God, for all these imply a certain likeness or kinship. But then there could be no doctrine of God except in purely negative form: "Whatever you say, I tell you flat: God is not that." In the Bible, New Testament as well as Old, there is constant use of symbol and analogy to set forth the nature of God. In the Old Testament he is pictured as creator, king, captain, lord, ruler, judge. More intimately conceived, he is shield, defense, refuge, hiding place, guide, shepherd; and in a few places he is called Father. All these, including the favorite New Testament word of Father, are symbols taken from the analogy of human relations and experience.

Sacraments

The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper hold a unique place in the life and worship of the church. They are outstanding examples of the use of symbol, the symbol of object and of action. With the exception of the Friends all Christian bodies agree in their use, though there are wide differences as to form of celebration and even more as to their significance.

Some important points of general agreement may be noted first, though even here there are differences in the form of statement. The sacraments are symbols, alike of object and action. In this symbolic action both God and man are involved. Like all Christian symbols they set forth the truth; a sacrament is *verbum visible*. It is a means through which God gives his grace to men. The action symbol concerns both God and man, God's gift and

man's response, though in Roman Catholic teaching the latter at times seems almost wholly to disappear. They are historical, commonly considered to have been established by Christ himself; in any case they belong to the historic Church from its beginnings. They are sacraments of the Church; they are administered by the Church and involve our relation to the Church.

Within this framework, however, radical differences appear. To be saved means to be cleansed from sin and renewed in life. For evangelical thought the movement is in the personal-ethical sphere, and that applies to the sacraments. They are no more and no less than a setting forth of the gospel itself, of God's love and the summons to man to respond in faith and obedience. And they bring the same gift that is promised when men receive the gospel: God's gift of himself in love and fellowship and as the power of a new life. There is no special "sacramental grace" differing from other forms of grace. Sacramentarianism sees in salvation a divine deed which transforms the essence, or substance, of sinful and corruptible human nature by the infusion of the divine essence which is holy and incorruptible. In baptism there is removed the corrupt and sinful nature (original sin), and in the mass man receives the divine nature through the transformed elements of the bread and wine. Here the categories are not personal and ethical, and the sacraments are viewed as instruments of a special kind of grace which is essential to salvation.

How is the grace of God given men through the sacraments? The evangelical answer is twofold: All grace is from God who "is at work in you, both to will and to work" (Phil. 2:13). But his action is that of Person coming to person and demanding a personal response. In Roman teaching the action of the sacraments is direct and necessary. Some would call this objective—so in the criticism by Gustaf Aulén in *The Faith of the Christian Church*. The Protestant conception, however, is certainly not subjective; for it stands for a real grace that is conferred by God. The contrast is best seen as that of the personal-ethical to the impersonal, physical, and mechanical. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* declares that "the expressions used by St. Thomas seem clearly to indicate that the

sacraments act after the manner of physical causes," belonging to the physical rather than the moral order.[2] It is difficult to avoid this interpretation of Catholic teaching. That is the meaning of the accepted phrase *ex opere operato*. Grace is "conferred through the act performed." The sacramental action in and by itself is decisive. The sacraments "contain the grace which they signify." [3]

The Roman Church apparently feels the difficulties of this position. So there are many who adopt "the system of instrumental moral causality." The real position is seen when the question is raised as to what is required in the attitude of the recipient. If there be a "moral causality" here, then a moral response would be requisite. So it is asserted that in the case of adults there must be the "intention" of receiving the sacrament. The Council of Trent, however, declared that the grace was conferred "on those who do not place an obstacle thereunto." Even this minimal requirement has to be given up in the case of the eucharist. Since "in whatever state the recipient may be it is always the body and blood of Christ," not even the intention of receiving is necessary. This clearly reduces sacramental action to the physical or mechanical.

Protestantism has not been entirely free from this nonethical, impersonal conception. Calvin's doctrine of election, foreordination, and irresistible grace presents a grace that works with necessity and that cannot be lost. From his high church heritage John Wesley retained, even in later years, the idea of the baptismal regeneration of infants despite its inconsistency with his general position.[4] Nor was Luther consistent here. Assuming that the New Testament commanded infant baptism, and holding to the necessity of faith, he asserted that, since God commanded the former, he would supply the infant with the latter, a conclusion which robs faith in such case of its Pauline-Reformation meaning.

The question of authority also needs consideration here. The

[2] Article, "Sacraments," by Daniel J. Kennedy, Professor of Sacramental Theology, Catholic University of America.

[3] So the Council of Trent, "On the Sacraments in General," Canons vi and viii.

[4] *Works*, Vol. I, Sermon XLV. This position was never held by his followers.

Council of Trent declared that the seven sacraments of the Roman Church were instituted by Christ, though there have not been lacking those who held to a "mediate" institution in line with Cardinal Newman's principle of development. In any case the Church is accepted here as final authority. Protestantism has commonly held that its two sacraments were established by Christ. Modern historical criticism raises questions here. Only Matt. 28:19 ascribes to Jesus a command to baptize. Do these words belong to the original Gospel text? And if that be granted, does it follow that they are authentic words of Jesus? How then could we explain the earliest practice of the Church which seems to have been baptism in the name of Christ rather than with the trinitarian formula of Matt. 28:19? Similar questions are raised by scholars in relation to the Lord's Supper. Did Jesus look forward to a continued celebration of a memorial supper? Paul, indeed, indicates this (1 Cor. 11:24-25). But Luke alone of the Gospels cites the words, "Do this in remembrance of me" (22:19); and he uses them only in connection with the bread. Further, some ancient manuscripts omit them from Luke, the Revised Standard Version following these. (It might well be noted here that this is but one of a number of points at which differences appear in the way in which the Gospels and Paul report the Last Supper and the words of Jesus.)

The historical-critical conclusion, however, will be decisive only to those for whom biblical authority is of the legalistic-literalistic type. The early Church apparently was not deterred by lack of specific commands, for it seems to have practiced baptism and the Lord's Supper from the beginning. Nor should the Church today wait upon historical evidence as to the institution. Here no more than in the field of ethics do we depend upon specific rules. We need to ask other questions: Do these rites truly set forth the gospel faith? Do they reflect the spirit of Christ and the heart of his teaching? Do they minister to the spiritual life of God's people and rightly present the nature and claim of the Church? In all this, too, we may rightly give weight to the fact that in these rites we are joined with the Church of the ages and

that the Church through the ages has found here a source of help and an effective proclamation of its message.[5] Here, as elsewhere, we recognize the fact of a continuing work of Christ in revelation and redemption through the Holy Spirit within the Christian fellowship.

It remains to point out how close the sacraments are, alike in materials and action, to our everyday life. Water and washing, food and drink, fellowship at table, these belong to daily living. And this has a significance which is not often considered. This is God's world; there is in it nothing common or unclean. The common meal may become a sacrament of fellowship with God as among men. "The trivial round, the common task" are not merely the way of duty; they are ways of fellowship with God in faith and love and service, and so means of grace. But this wider meaning of the sacramental does not detract from the special significance of the historic sacraments which we are now to consider.

Baptism

Baptism was the early and universal practice of the Church. It was the rite in which converts declared their faith and allegiance and by which they were received into the Christian fellowship. But it conveyed other meanings to the early Christians. Water was the symbol of cleansing, and that was the work of the Spirit that was poured out upon those who believed. For Paul it is in addition the symbol of union with Christ in death and resurrection. Paul's emphasis here is plainly ethical rather than mystical. In baptism (here plainly immersion) the believer is "buried into death" that, raised from death with Christ, he may walk in newness of life. Baptismal action voices the assurance that "if we have died with Christ, . . . we shall also live with him." It is a summons: "Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:3-11). Here is clear illustration of the way in which divine and human, religious assurance and moral demand, belong together in the sacraments as in the whole doctrine of salvation.

[5] Cf. Aulén, *op. cit.*, pp. 372-74.

The meaning of baptism for the Church can be indicated in a few words, following these general lines. There is here the act of an individual who, repenting, makes confession of faith in Christ and gives himself to God. But it is no merely individual matter. It is a Church rite. By this rite the Church receives candidates into its fellowship and in so doing obligates itself to care for them. The rite, therefore, is preferably celebrated in the Church and always by one acting for the Church. Finally, it sets forth the gospel of God's grace: God's forgiving mercy and the cleansing from sin by his Spirit.

What of the form of baptism? Should it be by immersion, or may it be by pouring or sprinkling? The earliest custom was probably immersion, as Paul's words suggest; but the exact form apparently was not viewed as something prescribed, and the other forms came early into use when immersion was not feasible. So, it would seem, when the Philippian jailer "was baptized at once, with all his family," "the same hour of the night" (Acts 16:33), probably with water from the same well which served the jailer when he washed the wounds of Paul and Silas. Of like significance is the change which seems to have taken place from the earlier form of baptism in the name of Christ or into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; Acts 2:38; *et al.*) to the later use of the trinitarian formula. Here again is the freedom from literalism and legalism which marked the early Church. The absence of formal creeds, of specific requirements as to Church organization and forms of worship, with Paul's insistence upon vital centralities (the gospel of grace, the way of love, the gift of the Spirit), all this points the same way.

More difficult are the questions raised by the idea of infant baptism. Salvation demands not only God's grace but man's response in faith. So with the sacraments: *nullum sacramentum sine fide*, the reformers declared. But how can the infant exercise faith? Or how can one person's faith serve for another? Is not this a relapse into the mechanical-magical? And is it not joined traditionally to the idea of baptismal regeneration and the belief that infants dying without baptism are lost? Such misconceptions are joined to this

practice in the Roman Church and sometimes in Protestantism. Are they necessarily involved in it?

The practice of infant baptism began very early. Whether it appears in the New Testament is not certain; the passages which refer to the baptism of a convert's household or family are not conclusive (Acts 16:15, 31-33; I Cor. 1:16). Probably what lay back of it was not an incipient sacramentarianism but the idea of family solidarity, particularly strong with the Jewish people. If the Protestant Church is to continue this practice it should understand the principles which underlie it and the obligations entailed for Church and home. It should be more than a form in which the child receives a name and should be free from all suggestion of the magical.

In its insistence on the personal-ethical, Protestantism has sometimes moved over to extreme individualism. Personal life is social as well as individual, and the principle of social solidarity has a vital place in the way of salvation. The home is not merely a biological and economic unit; it is a religious-ethical unit of which, for good or ill, the child is a part. The question is not whether the home should choose for the child, but what it should choose. If it fails, other agencies will mold the growing child. The home should choose moral ideals and religious faith for the child's training. In baptism the parents speak for the child, giving it to God and his Church, pledging Christian nurture.

The Church, in turn, standing for God's will and God's help for human life, accepts the home and the child as rightly belonging to it. The Church is a fellowship which includes many fellowships, of which the home is chief. It is no mere company of individuals. Baptism is the dedication of the home and its children to God and the Church; it is the acceptance by the Church of the home and the child. The religion of the Father and his children is not a religion which views the child as outside the Church or as a guest until, reaching maturity, it is competent to decide to enter.

This does not exclude the requirement of understanding and faith and personal decision. Quite the contrary. Baptism is not the end but the beginning. In it home and Church obligate themselves

to bring up the child "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The aim is not to impose authority but to further growth, so that the child may come for itself to know and choose the Christian faith and way. Then at last, freely and with knowledge, he "confirms" the choice made for him, confesses the faith in which he has been reared, and assumes the obligations of a member of the Church. To that final decision all the rest looks forward. The youth may refuse this decision, but the point of greatest danger is that church and home may look upon infant baptism as a form without discerning clearly its meaning or accepting the obligation involved. That obligation is not met when parents merely send the young child to the church school, or when the church gives a brief course of instruction before confirmation or the reception of its youth into full membership.

What of the symbolism of baptism as indicating a cleansing from sin and the gift of God's Spirit? How can these apply in infant baptism? Where is this a means of grace for the child? If the act is taken by itself, the questions cannot be answered from an evangelical standpoint. It is different when infant baptism is seen in its total setting and with its forward look. Here is the declaration, not only that home and child belong to God, but that the God of grace has saving access to the child and that he can use home and church as a means of grace for the child. Modern psychology has taught us how potent the first years are for evil as well as for good. But if evil has access to the child, so does the good. God is not shut out, and he does not wait for later years. Christianity is no mere adult religion. The water of baptism symbolizes for the child the work of the Spirit reaching it through church and home.

The Lord's Supper

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been the central and most significant rite of worship in the Church. Paul's words in 1 Cor. 11, our earliest New Testament reference, suggest that the Church of those first years believed that Christ himself had commanded this observance. In any case we know that it goes back to the beginning

of the Church and from the first was observed as a memorial of Christ's last supper with his disciples. At the close of that supper Jesus took from the table first some bread, then a cup of wine. His words, as reported, told of his coming death, a death for men, and then held up the hope of the coming kingdom in which they would eat again. In Paul's report there is added the idea of commemoration.

The common meal was a significant part of the life of the early Church. In Acts 2:42 teaching and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, are joined in the picture of the Church's life. The fellowship of the common meal had a religious meaning; it was for them a means of grace as truly as the teaching and the prayers. Paul's account suggests that at the close of this common meal, perhaps regularly, the leader took bread and wine, blessed them, repeating the words of Jesus, and passed them to the company in solemn service. Interestingly, Paul's rebuke of the wealthier members of the Corinthian Church is concerned not with this closing service, but rather with the fellowship of the common meal which their conduct imperiled. Abuses like this may have been a chief reason for the separation of the Lord's Supper from the common meal, the latter continuing as the love feast (agape; cf. Jude 12).

The sacrament has for us the same rich meaning as for that first generation. (1) It is a service of commemoration. It calls to mind the supreme event of history and the central fact of our faith: Christ in his love and life and death bringing to us the saving mercy of God. It is a sacrament of love and the cross. Here is its great objective meaning. (2) It is a service of thanksgiving (eucharist in its primary sense), of confession (alike of our sins and of our faith in Christ as Savior), and dedication (an act of renewed devotion—*sacramentum* in its original Latin meaning). (3) It is a service of fellowship, of holy communion. It has its human side, as at the beginning; it is a fellowship of believers with one another, a union in faith and love and worship which takes in not only the immediate company but the whole Church on earth and in heaven. For this reason its normal celebration is by and with a company, not individually. It is a communion with God in Christ, not only in our worship of spirit but

in God's gift of himself in love and grace. It means a real presence of Christ, not a physical presence of body and blood in transformed bread and wine, but a spiritual presence, with a sharing of his spirit and life. In all these aspects it is a means of grace, not only in its central act as we receive the sacred emblems and realize their meaning, but in all its aspects of remembrance, thanksgiving, confession, dedication, and communion.

These deeper meanings have too often been lost by the Church where it has taught "the sacrifice of the Mass" and the transformation of material elements into the literal body and blood of Christ. The idea of sacrifice is, indeed, central; but it is not found in a priestly performance. It is found in Christ's giving of himself for us, once for all, in life and love and death, and in the ever-renewed offering of ourselves in faith and in the acceptance of his way.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

"PERHAPS THE OLDEST AND MOST PERSISTENT OF ALL OUR RELIGIOUS IDEAS," WRITES E. F. SCOTT, "IS THAT OF THE SPIRIT." [1] It is the concrete and vital expression of the twofold conviction of religion, that there is a Power greater than man and that this Power touches man's life not only as rule but as presence and help. Christianity is the clear and full expression of this double conviction. The thought of the divine presence and sharing is embodied in the unity of a threefold faith in God: the Father "in heaven," holy, mighty, and merciful; the God who gave himself in love and saving deed through Jesus Christ; the God who is not only with us but dwells in us as Holy Spirit. The faith in the gift of the Spirit was vital to the primitive Church. The birth of the Church came with the gift of the Spirit. The life of the Church and that of the individual disciple was through the indwelling Spirit.

Although formally retained in the teaching of the Church, the doctrine of the Spirit cannot be said to have any such central place in the life and thought of the Church today. Many think of the Holy Spirit only in connection with the apostolic benediction and the Apostles' Creed. The doctrine of the Spirit, as of the Trinity, is left to the discussion of the theologians. If they think of its personal religious meaning, it is as something belonging to the few, to the saints or the mystically minded. By some it is discredited through its association with emotional excesses and fanati-

[1] *The Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 11.

cal ideas as found in certain cults. And yet, whether associated with the term "Holy Spirit" or not, the basic idea has remained. For this conviction of the living presence and power of God in us and in his Church is inseparable from the Christian faith. There is, in fact, a growing appreciation of the vital importance of this truth, alike for our faith in a living God here and now working in the world, for our interest in a religion of spiritual dynamic and not merely of doctrine and duty, and for the deeply felt need of strength and help in personal life.

Our primary concern in this study is with the meaning of the Spirit in relation to salvation. This empirical approach is that of the New Testament. Its writers nowhere formulate a doctrine of the Spirit, but everywhere there is evidence of the experience of a new life of love and power and peace. Men knew this life as a gift of God. But it was not something simply handed down from a distant God. It meant God's own presence in them. They used various terms to denote this presence: the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, God in men, Christ in men. But all these referred to the same experience and reflected the same faith, the faith in the living God, the holy God, who gave himself to men to dwell in them and give them life. The work of the Spirit in salvation must be seen in relation to the whole concept of God.

The Holy Spirit and the Concept of God

The varying forms in which the Spirit has been conceived have reflected varying conceptions of God, and these must be indicated briefly.

1. We note first the conception of God which emphasizes his transcendence and otherness and subordinates to this the personal and ethical. Here God is first of all sovereign power, absolute and inscrutable. The Spirit is not so much God's presence but rather a power from God acting upon man or communicated to him in gifts miraculously bestowed or perhaps in an ecstatic experience in which man's spirit is dispossessed as the divine Spirit enters in.

This conception appears in the Old Testament stories concerning Samson and Saul (Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14-15; 1 Sam. 11:6; 19:23-

24). In the Samson stories the spirit of Jehovah means supernatural strength, with Saul a frenzied enthusiasm; in neither case is any moral element suggested. This frenzy, or ecstasy, seemed to have marked the bands of "prophets"; hence Hosea declares, "The prophet is a fool, the man that hath the spirit is mad" (Hos. 9:7 A.S.V.). There are survivals of this in the New Testament, especially in the "speaking with tongues." From Paul's references this appears as an incoherent utterance, under stress of great emotion, unintelligible, and requiring in the speaker or in another a special power to interpret. The general viewpoint has survived in various forms. Here belongs the idea of the inspiration of biblical writers as a control which secured absolute infallibility, including the "scientific, historical, or geographical," and even supplied the words to be written. On the ecstatic side we find throughout the Church's history and in our own time the groups which stress emotional experiences, healings, and speaking with tongues as the marks of the Spirit's presence.[2]

2. In contrast with this conception the idea of God as spiritual substance, or essence, has entered in to influence the doctrine of the Spirit. Broadly speaking, it is the Hellenistic as against the Hebraic viewpoint. It appears in extreme, or metaphysical, mysticism, where the kinship of God and man is stressed and the distinction of persons is to be overcome by the absorption of man into the divine. Where the Spirit is referred to, the thought is that of a divine substance to be received by man. And this is the background of the sacramentarian conception of salvation, where the dominant idea is not that of a saving personal fellowship with God by the work of the Spirit but that of the transformation of a sinful

[2] Cf. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 155, 163, 164. "Inspiration in itself has no sanctifying influence. Balaam was inspired. Saul was among the prophets." The dogma of infallibility of pope and council involves the same idea. Infallibility involves an absolute control, external and compulsive rather than ethical-spiritual.

The Alexandrian Jew Philo gives us perhaps the earliest definite statement of this viewpoint. "A prophet utters nothing of his own, but the foreign message of another who speaks through him. . . . His own intelligence departs at the arrival of the divine Spirit, and returns with its departure." See T. Rees, *The Holy Spirit*, pp. 50, 51.

"nature" through the divine "substance" into which the elements have been miraculously changed.

3. A third conception of God underlies the dominant idea of the Spirit in the New Testament. Here the emphasis is personal-ethical. God is transcendent; the Spirit is *Holy* Spirit, Spirit of the transcendent God. Yet man is akin to God and so can receive God's Spirit. God is the God of power, and to receive his Spirit is to receive power from on high; but the power is moral-spiritual, the power of a new life from a God of righteousness and love. The prophetic faith of the Old Testament was the background for this teaching. There we find a God who is personal-ethical and a living, redemptive presence. The spirit of such a God means wisdom and understanding for his people. It brings gifts of mind and heart and devotion such as are indicated in the Servant of Jehovah (Isa. 11; 42; 61). It means God going with his people as guiding presence and giving them rest (Exod. 33:14). It means the rebirth of a people and the coming of a time when the Spirit will be given to a whole people, not to the few (Ezek. 37; Joel 2:28-32, quoted in Acts 2:17-21; Isa. 32:15-16; Zech. 12:10).

The Spirit in the Teaching of Paul

The Church is especially indebted to Paul as regards the doctrine of the Spirit. His approach is vital and practical. He deals with excesses in church life, as at Corinth, which sprang from wrong ideas and issued in wrong practice; but his chief concern is to interpret the new way of faith and life.

For Paul the Holy Spirit is (1) the Spirit of the one God from whom comes all life, all salvation. Whether he speaks of God in us, or Christ in us, or the Holy Spirit, the reference is to the one life given to us, the one God who dwells in his children. (2) We know the Spirit of God when we look at Christ. "The Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17). Hence the Spirit is ethical. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). Here is the test of the disciple: "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9). And the Spirit of Christ in

us is the Holy Spirit in us. (3) The Spirit is the source of all Christian life and of every grace, not simply of special gifts and unusual experiences. The moral power of the new life is wholly from the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-11). A man cannot even confess Jesus as Lord save by the Spirit. Harriet Auber's hymn is wholly in Paul's spirit:

> And every virtue we possess,
> And every victory won,
> And every thought of holiness
> Are his alone.

(4) The Spirit, therefore, belongs to all Christ's followers. To be a Christian is to have the Spirit. There are differences in gifts and in service rendered, but "all these are inspired by one and the same Spirit." And the highest gift, that of love, is the gift which all must have (1 Cor. 12:13). (5) The Spirit is wholly from God, but we may have it only as we express it in life. "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). That follows necessarily when the Spirit is conceived ethically. (6) The Church is the creation of the Spirit, the instrument of the Spirit, the place where the Spirit dwells and where the individual may most fully receive its gifts.

Briefly stated, by the Holy Spirit we mean God as presence and power working in his world, and first of all in the heart and life of man. The Spirit is God giving himself, dwelling in man, bringing light, overcoming evil, creating the new life of faith and love and righteousness, creating fellowship with himself and among men.

The Significance of the Doctrine of the Spirit

The doctrine has abiding significance for Christian faith and life.

1. It brings into living unity the aspects of divine transcendence and immanence. It is *Holy* Spirit, the spirit of the transcendent God; and man's life is seen, not as unaided human achievement or development but as a gift from above. It is *indwelling* Spirit, the Spirit of the immanent God. Here the kinship of God and man is

recognized, not only in God's dwelling in man but in the fact that by the gift of God's Spirit man becomes truly and fully man. The Spirit shows how otherness and likeness both belong to God and are in unity.

2. It makes clear and effective the union of the individual and the social in religion. Here religion appears as the inner and intimate relation of the individual soul with God. At the same time through the Spirit men are made one in vital fellowship with each other. For the Spirit is love, and man may have it only as he lives in love with others; it is the fellowship-creating Spirit. It is the Spirit that has come to us through Jesus Christ, that we receive and share in Christ's Church, that is witnessed through the historic revelation. The individualism and subjectivism of extreme mysticism are here excluded. Yet the stress of fellowship and the historic Church does not mean institutionalism nor exclude God's access to men outside the Christian Church or preceding this.

3. The Christian concept of the Spirit shows how the religious and the ethical are united. The Christian life is seen as wholly the gift of God, a life of absolute dependence upon God. But the life thus given is through and through ethical. It is love and righteousness, and man can have it only as he expresses it actively in outgoing love and righteous living. Thus the life of dependence is one of freedom; it is not submission to rule or compulsion by external power. The life is wholly the work of the Spirit, yet it is in the deepest sense the life of man, chosen in the freedom of faith, expressing his supreme desire and inmost spirit, lived out in freedom of thought and act.

4. Here freedom and authority are joined. Authority remains, as it must remain, in religion; for religion is seeing our life in the light of the Eternal and living our life according to his will. But here God by his Spirit is the life within us, not simply the will above us. So the will of God becomes our life and joy and peace. The psalmist could say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God," because the law was within his heart.

How Men May Receive the Spirit

How may men receive the Spirit? The question has really been answered in the discussion of the means of grace. Though the New Testament uses various names, the life which God gives us is one and undivided. One may speak of the gifts of grace, of eternal life as a present possession, or of the indwelling of God or the Spirit or Christ; all these refer to the one fact, that God gives us life by giving himself to us. By the Holy Spirit in us we mean this presence of God by which we have life.

This helps us to rule out certain not uncommon errors. These root in the idea of the work of the Spirit as a special and separate form of God's saving action. In this way men thought of miraculous gifts like those of healing and "speaking with tongues," or of special endowment for office given uniquely to pope and bishops and priests. Here, too, is the Roman misconception of an exclusive possession and control by the Church.

At the other extreme is the limiting conception of a gift bestowed in some one-time emotional experience where "the power" comes upon men in some overwhelming action. True, not all share equally in this gift; there are men whose sanctity of life and uniqueness of service reveal an unusual presence and work of the Spirit. But the truth remains: God gives his Spirit to all who seek after him and will receive him, and there is no Christian faith and life which is not the work of God's Spirit.

All this indicates how simple the way is by which man may receive that divine indwelling by which he gains peace, courage, strength, joy, and, above all, that spirit of love which was the spirit of Christ and which marks the child of God. What he needs is to come into personal fellowship with God and to live in that fellowship day by day. That means a daily attitude of confession and repentance, of trust and devotion, and of conscious communion with God. In a word it is the habitual opening of the door of life in thought and affection and will so that God can come in.

A final query awaits us. We speak of God entering into a man's soul, of God's Spirit possessing and ruling and transforming the

spirit of man. But these are terms of space and substance. Do they not violate the essential nature of personal being, self-conscious, self-ruling, dwelling in a world of its own? The answer is found in the analogies of human relations. Explain it as we will, the facts are clear. A man finds a friend, strong in character, ripe in experience, rich in wisdom and love, broad in his sympathies. Let him bring to such friendship time and sympathy and devotion. His own life will grow through the spirit of his friend. That spirit will enter in to shape his own spirit. It will not, however, dispossess or diminish his personality; rather it may mean the achieving of it, and that in terms of his own distinct individuality. But if that can happen between man and man, how much more between God and man, the God who is "closer . . . than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet," who has a thousand ways of intimate access to human life. There is mystery here, but it is the mystery which belongs to life itself, especially on its highest levels. There is reason for wonder here, but the wonder is that of infinite love which is thus willing to dwell with us, not that of the magical or mechanical or ecstatic with which men have so often sought to understand God's spirit-working.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE CHURCH

PROTESTANT THOUGHT IN THE LAST GENERATION HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH and of the need of a right doctrine of the Church. This does not mean that it is turning back to the Roman identification of Church and Christianity or moving toward a "high church" doctrine. In part this is due to the world crisis of our day, a crisis marked by two world wars and the threat of a third, by the rise of fascism, the influence of whose ideas has not disappeared with the passing of Mussolini and Hitler, by the even greater threat of communism, and by a permeating spirit of secularism. All this has brought the realization that only a Christianity united in witness and action can successfully oppose this tide of false faiths and evil forces.

The new ecumenical movement has been in part motivated by this situation, in part by a deeper appreciation of the significance of the Church in Christian life and history. At the same time it has compelled a rethinking of the doctrine of the Church. For it is the doctrine of the Church, with the related matters of ministry and sacraments, which constitutes the point of widest difference in the effort to get together.

The Nature of the Church

Rightly to understand the nature of the Church and its function we must see it in history and study it in its relation to God's purpose and his way of working. Here again we must keep in mind that Christianity is an organic whole and a living movement,

not a composite of Scripture, doctrines, ritual, and ethics, comprehended in an institution. In this divine-human movement the Church is a vital part. It would be wrong to say that Church and Christianity are the same; it is simple fact that Christianity and Church are inseparable in idea as in history.

Christianity is the religion of a fellowship. That is true of individual Christianity. John Wesley put it rightly: "The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." It is even more clear when we look at Christianity as a whole, in history and in the world. The group aspect, or social nature, of Christianity follows from the fact that it is historical and ethical, and this roots in turn in the nature of God. God works in history. That means that he works with a people and through a people. Only so can his work have continuity and growth; only so can the heritage of truth and life be handed on and the full end reached at last—the redemption of all life, inner and outer, individual and social. The ethical nature of Christianity points the same way. Religion means love, righteousness, service; these can be achieved and expressed only in social relations. As religion rises in the scale, as it becomes more spiritual and ethical and inclusive, the group aspect will undergo corresponding change. The empirical Church will become more ethical and spiritual, more truly one in spirit and form. But its place in Christianity will become more significant, not less.

1. The Church of the New Testament, like the faith of the New Testament, must be understood against the background of the Old. The religion of Israel was the religion of a people. It remained such even when the people were dispersed through the Roman world and the Israel of the Holy Land became simply one of the many peoples included in the empire. At the same time this religion of the people became more and more the religion of the individual as well. Where God is known as personal and ethical, there religion becomes more and more the vital concern of the individual person. The message of the prophets, the religion of the devotional psalms, and the growing hope of personal immortality are witness to this. The development of the synagogue as the center of Jewish religious life meant the furtherance at once

of group and individual religion. Its services of Scripture reading, prayer, and teaching fostered both alike. Little regarded but deeply significant was the number of simple, devout souls, *die Stillen im Lande*, nurtured by this synagogue worship and a religious home life such as that in which John the Baptist and the child Jesus grew up and in which Timothy was trained (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). In the Dispersion the synagogue was the means of winning non-Jews, men who were drawn by its monotheistic faith and ethical teaching. The elements of nationalism, legalism, and ceremonialism still remained; but here was a definite preparation for the Christian Church.

One may approach the question of the beginnings of the Christian Church in one of two ways. Theologians are wont to inquire how the Church was established. But that involves the assumption that the Church came to be by some act of formal institution, presumably by Jesus. The Roman Catholic doctrine is the most thoroughgoing expression of this view. It belongs to Rome's legalistic-institutional conception. A modified form of this viewpoint is found with those who assume that the New Testament presents a common and authoritative form of organization, ministry, and sacraments, and a clearly defined doctrine of the Church.

The other approach is the religious-historical. This does not involve a merely humanistic view. It recognizes the creative fact of Christ as standing back of the Church. It sees the Church as central in God's purpose and plan, and its life as the work of the Spirit of God. But it sees God as working from within, in the life of the Church as of the believer. The directive of that life was given to the Church in Christ, in his word and life. The guidance was given by the Spirit working in the fellowship.

Our Lord himself followed such guidance. He made clear to men the God of forgiving mercy and God's gracious purpose to establish his kingdom of love and righteousness. But the story of his days in the wilderness, of his praying on the mount before he set his face toward Jerusalem on that last journey, as well as of the last struggle in the Garden, these all show how Jesus sought the guidance of God as to the way he should take as well as strength

to take it. Did he think of long centuries that would precede the final coming of that kingdom and plan for his Church accordingly? Or did he think of that coming as near at hand, as the Gospel records seem to suggest? We know that he did disclaim knowledge "of that day or that hour" (Mark 13:32). The will of God was clear; the way of God men were to learn in trust and obedience, guided by his Spirit.

All this is illustrated in the beginnings and growth of the Church. There is no indication that Jesus supplied his followers, either before his death or after his resurrection, with any set of directions as to the organization of the Church, its function, or its ministry. What we find at the beginning is not an institution but a fellowship. What we need to do in the study of the Church is, first, to understand the meaning of fellowship in religion and especially the meaning of this fellowship of Christ's followers; second, to consider how this fellowship shaped for itself the needed forms for its life and work.

The essential meaning of fellowship is perhaps best indicated by the word sharing, or having in common (*koinonia, communio*). The idea belongs to the most common experiences of life. There is, indeed, no life without sharing; and the sharing or, broadly speaking, relatedness increases in significance as we rise in the scale of life. Christian fellowship represents the highest level. Its meaning may be indicated by three terms: the sharers, the shared, and the sharing. All three appear in the picture of the first fellowship given in Acts 2:42-47.

The "shared" comes first, that which the disciples had in common (*koinos*). It was this that created the fellowship and bound its members together. The Church was not created by people coming together and forming an organization any more than by a divine prescription. Christ created the first fellowship by his presence which drew men to him and which formed a company. He remained the uniting center. We can readily see from Paul and from Acts what these first generations had in common. They knew a living Christ who was for them revealer of the Father, Lord of their life, the incarnate mercy of God. They were joined by a

common experience: God's forgiveness and the presence and power of his Spirit. They shared a common hope, that Jesus would return and establish his kingdom and that they would live with him after death. The Church was thus the product of a living process, the work of God in Christ, by the Spirit.

The "sharing" is equally vital. The fellowship is more than a possessing in common, more than a company. It is a dynamic term. There is an active sharing which is essential to its life. *Koinonia* means fellowshiping, not just a fellowship.[1] The picture in Acts indicates associated action in worship, teaching, and the sharing of material goods. What they had still to learn was the scope of this sharing, the obligation to carry their message to Gentile and Jew everywhere.

As regards the "sharers" the New Testament uses a variety of terms to express the rich meaning of this new body. These writers link it with the past, calling it "a holy nation, God's own people." It is spoken of as "the household of God," "a holy temple in the Lord," "a dwelling place of God in the Spirit," "the body of Christ" (1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 12:12-27). These are all figures of speech, symbols or pictures used to indicate a spiritual reality. They move in the personal-social-mystical realm.

Necessarily, there entered into the life of the early Church a fourth aspect, that of organization. The Church is more than spiritual entity; it is a social-historical reality. The first three aspects are constitutive; this aspect might be called instrumental. Its need did not appear at first. The concern of those first disciples in Jerusalem was with the rich meaning of their own fellowship and the imminent return of their Lord. They were not looking out upon the world nor forward into history. But even at the beginning they had their leaders, and the growing life of the Church soon made demands for planned and concerted action. Men were required for these needs. Paul speaks of apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, healers, helpers, administrators, and men speaking in various kinds of tongues (1 Cor. 12). Questions of

[1] See H. Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, koinonia.*

leadership and authority came up—witness the case of Paul and his churches. There was need for securing and expressing the solidarity of the whole Church as well as order and unity in the community. The faith required interpretation and formulation for purposes of teaching and evangelizing as well as excluding error. So there came in due time an ordered ministry, ritual and sacramental observance, and the formulation of the faith, simply and unsystematically in the New Testament, later in formal creeds.

It is not necessary, nor is it possible, to trace this development. It is important to note that this did not come into being all at once, that it was a pattern viewed as divinely prescribed and obligatory. But that does not mean that this was not a vital aspect of the Church. All this belonged to its life. This was God's way of working with the Church and through the Church: not imposing a pattern upon it or compelling action, but giving it life and guiding its growth where it was willing to follow his Spirit.

2. A very different interpretation is represented by the Roman Catholic Church. Here two points are crucial. (1) There is the insistence, not simply that organization and institution are necessary for the Church, but that a particular form of institution has been divinely determined and that only this constitutes the true Church, the form being that of the Roman Church. Here the Church is Christianity, and the only Church is the Roman Church. Papal sovereignty, priestly orders, sacraments, formulations of faith, prescribed rules of conduct are all included. (2) As far as possible all this is read back into the beginnings. It is seen as prescribed by Christ either in his earthly ministry (the primacy of Peter and so, it is assumed, of his successors) or in the days between his resurrection and ascension. Where it cannot be traced back, it is held that the Church, divinely guided, expresses infallibly in its order the will of God. The Church is seen as the total expression of Christianity; it is the kingdom of God which Christ came to establish. God had given to Christ a threefold authority: to teach, to rule, to save. This authority Christ committed to the Church, more specifically to the Twelve, with Peter at their head and the bishops as their successors. These, with the priesthood through

which the Church works, constitute the Church. Believers enter the Church, are cared for as children by Mother Church, receive through her the gift of salvation; they do not constitute the Church. The Church is institution, not fellowship.

In its three great functions the Church—that is, the hierarchy—is absolute in power and infallible in decision. (1) That is true of its teaching. It is interesting that the Roman Church of today is encouraging its people to read the Bible and is making this available to them, but it is the Church which interprets the Bible and tells them what to believe. Faith is not the inner conviction wrought by the Spirit and issuing in surrender to God; it is the obedient acceptance of the Church's teaching. (2) The Church has supreme authority to rule. It is not a question here of inculcating Christian principles or of counseling as to practice. It is rather a legal-political power, including nations as well as individuals and prescribing rules of conduct. (3) Most important is the control of the means of salvation. Salvation is viewed in objective, if not external, fashion as a good possessed by the Church which it mediates to men. This goes with the whole priestly-sacramentarian system. The Church is *Heilsinstitut.* In all this the ethical, personal, and mystical are not excluded; but it is the legal-institutional which is determinative. The likeness to Roman imperialism and the influence of the latter are obvious.

It is easy to see what is lost in this conception of the Church. Instead of a fellowship the Church becomes an institution. Instead of direct personal access to the God of grace found in Christ there is an elaborate priestly-sacramentarian mediation. Worship is not the act of the brotherhood uniting in prayer and praise; it is primarily the act of the priesthood, alike in the approach to God and in the mediation of God's mercies to the people, as is clearly illustrated in its central action, that of the Mass.[2]

[2] Here reference should be made to those who use the word "Catholic" in its special sense while standing apart from the Roman Church, the Orthodox churches of the East and the high church Anglicans being leading representatives. These stress the sacraments, a priesthood ordained by bishops in the apostolic succession, with the Church as the divinely ordained instrument for man's salvation and the embodiment of the kingdom of God on earth. Here, too, is a certain exclusiveness in the claim to be the true Church.

3. The Protestant conception of the Church must be viewed against the background of the total Protestant conception of the Christian faith and life. "How can I get me a gracious God?" was the question in which Luther voiced his great concern. He found the answer in the Christian gospel whose simple word had been lost in the legalistic-sacramentarian-priestly system of the Roman Church. Religion was a personal relation, man finding this merciful God who received the sinner. The condition was simple. It rested for Luther, as for Paul, on the grace of God, God's free and undeserved love, forgiving, receiving, enabling. It demanded of man one thing as a condition: faith. And faith meant not just accepting prescribed beliefs, but trust in this God of mercy, surrender to him, and the doing of his will in a life where all was to be sacred, all a divine service.

This was personal as against institutional religion, but it was not individualistic. It was the religion of a fellowship, of a Church. The Church was for Luther first of all a given company of Christians in living fellowship, a *Gemeinschaft* (communion, fellowship), not merely a *Gemeinde* (parish). But that did not mean a strict "independentism" or "congregationalism." Each Christian group was part of the whole body of Christ and all a part of the historic Church reaching back to the beginnings. As regards the heritage of the past Luther himself was essentially conservative in terms alike of doctrine and practice, except where he felt that the gospel was contradicted. He was primarily a preacher of the gospel, not a reformer of Church or theology.

In its task of preaching and teaching, of directing worship and providing pastoral care, the Church required organization and administration. In principle Protestantism was here radical. It rejected the claim of a sacred institution and priesthood as necessary to salvation. Access to the saving grace of God was open to all men. True, there is a mediation which is necessary. The message of grace, the understanding of truth, comfort in sorrow, guidance and help in life's needs must be brought to men. This is the true priestly work. But this belongs to all Christ's followers; it is the

priesthood of all believers.[3] In practice the Reformation churches maintained their trained and ordained ministry.

Such is the basic Protestant conception of the Church, but within the Protestant movement there have been wide differences as well as deviations from this general position.

In the Lutheran churches of Germany and Scandinavia, as well as in Anglicanism, the state church remained after the Reformation. The Church was a territorial unit, nationally, locally, and as a parish. People were members of the Church as they were citizens of the state. Here was a marked movement toward the institutional. To speak of such a body of people as believers was to empty that word of personal and vital significance. "Fellowship" (*koinonia*) became less an active religious term, more a formal belonging, often without contact with the church except on the occasion of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and burial. The idea of communion (*Gemeinschaft*) retreats behind that of community or parish (*Gemeinde*).

The second Protestant group has been variously named independents, separatists, the fellowship type, or, disparagingly, sects. The differences are so marked in these bodies that it would seem impossible to find here any common conception of the Church. The emphasis on unity as found in a free fellowship and not in an authoritarian institution with the insistence on freedom in the religious life and its expression led naturally to such differences. For a right understanding we need to go back beyond the Reformation and note the recurrent appearance of groups or societies seeking to find religious satisfaction which the Church itself did not provide, while still remaining in the Church, the later Protestant parallel being the pietist groups found more especially in Lutheranism. Such widely varying bodies as the Waldenses, Anabaptists and Baptists, Moravians, Quakers, Congregationalists, and Methodists are examples of the general movement. Some of these were

[3] "Catholics also believe in a universal priesthood," we are told, but hold to the need of a special, or "real," priesthood which alone can offer the needed sacrifice of the Mass. See *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, "Priesthood."

closely allied to the mother church—Lutheran, Reformed, or Anglican; others were entirely independent.

The source of these movements was not primarily doctrinal. Various influences entered in. There was a revolt against the authoritarian-institutional church, of which too much, it was felt, remained in Protestantism. The positive emphasis was upon the Church as a practicing communion, a fellowship of the followers of Christ. Sometimes, as in Congregationalism, the freedom of the independent local congregation was stressed. As against clericalism the fellowship idea gave a larger place to the laity in the direction of the Church, in free participation and expression in its religious life, as witnesses and workers, and in preaching. With the idea of a communion of practicing Christians there went the demand that membership should require individual decision. Stressed by many was the thought of the contrast of this fellowship with the world about it; that meant such matters as insistence on personal religious experience, higher ethical standards, or "puritanism," sometimes the "plain life" in garb and speech and manner as against "worldly" ways.

Summarizing, one may point to the desire for satisfaction of personal religious needs, the emphasis on Christian fellowship as actualized in a given group and as contrasted with the idea of the ecclesiastical institution, and the stress on the difference of such a group of Christ's followers from the world about it.

Methodism calls for special comment here, not because it offered a new doctrine but because of the way in which it united elements from three of the points of view noted above. Wesley considered himself a good Anglican all his life. The Methodists were not separatists; Wesley did not plan to found a new church. Methodism became an independent church because the Anglican Church could not, or would not, find place for the movement. Leaving his earlier high church position, Wesley ordained a bishop for the Methodist Church in America. This church has its bishops today, but they are men specially appointed to this ministry, not holding a higher order. A study of its official *Discipline* shows the strong Anglican influence in doctrine, ritual, and ministry. The influence

of the Reformation, however, is even clearer and goes deeper. It was during the reading of Luther's preface to the *Epistle to the Romans* that Wesley came to the turning point in his religious experience, and the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith remained basic for Methodist preaching. Equally clear is the influence of the "fellowship" churches, especially of the pietistic order. That influence appears in the stress on the group as seen in Methodist "classes" and prayer meetings, on lay activity and lay leadership, on religious experience and the work of the Spirit, and on the idea that salvation meant not simply forgiveness, or justification, but the making over of men in a new life (sanctification, or holiness). Here was a recovery of features that marked the primitive Church: religion as individual decision and personal experience, the Church as a fellowship of disciples rather than a clerical institution, a witnessing and working laity, a Christianity with an ethical demand which set it in contrast with the world about it.

Equally apparent in this second Protestant group are certain limitations and dangers, though again varying widely in different movements. Sometimes the ethical emphasis led to a new legalism. Often the revolt from ecclesiastical authority led to a literalistic biblicism. More important was the way in which the stress on the aspect of fellowship in the local group and the reaction against the institutionalism of the large established churches led, on the one hand, to a one-sided stress on the individual congregation, on the other, to a loss of the great heritage of the past and of oneness with the Church of the ages. Here congregationalism in government and denominationalism in the group have alike worked against the catholic spirit and the ecumenical outlook.

The hopeful aspect of Protestantism has been its capacity for growth and the way in which each group has contributed to the others for the enrichment of the concept of the Church and of its life. Our task is to bring these gains into unity. There is the growth of the ecumenical movement. The Church to which our individual groups belong is more and more seen as the Church of the ages and the world Church. Christian unity, interdenomina-

tional co-operation, and organic Church union are attendant movements.

The Function of the Church

The function of the Church has already been indicated in our study of the purpose of God and the nature of the Church. The purpose of God is the establishment of his kingdom, the creation of a new humanity, the family of the children of God. The Church is at once a central element in that goal and the chief instrument through which God works for its achievement. Hence its double task: first, to be the Church, to achieve the full life of the fellowship of God's children and to minister to its people; second, as the instrument of God to serve the world, ministering to its needs, witnessing to God's will for its life, bringing his saving gospel. The two tasks, clearly, are not separable.

1. "Let the Church be the Church." Here is its first task. There is nothing narrow or self-centered in this conception. Rightly understood, the whole task of the Church is here included; for it cannot be Christ's Church without being the servant of all the world. More specifically, however, we may consider here its calling to be the fellowship of God's children and to minister to them.

This means (1) the Church as the place of worship, bringing God to men, bringing men into the presence of God, uniting the people in a fellowship of adoration and praise, of confession and repentance, of faith and devotion. (2) Its work will involve teaching and training—education in the full sense of that term. That includes childhood and youth and age. That means knowledge: the history of God's redemptive work in Israel and the Church and the world, the great truths of the Christian faith, the Bible and its message, the ethics of the Christian way. The Church must train its people to think and know. But it means nurture as well as knowledge. It must lead its childhood into a conscious, personal religious life and further that life with old and young year after year. (3) As a family or fellowship the Church has a pastoral obligation, that of shepherd, the caring for all its people in all their needs; and not merely its ministers but all its people share in this duty. Com-

fort, counsel, material aid when needed, friendly interest, spiritual sharing, all these and more are included. (4) Finally, the Church should provide its people with opportunity for service and should guide them and organize them for such service.

2. The Church is here to serve the world. The world is its parish. All the tasks suggested above have a relevancy to this larger field of service.

(1) The work of evangelism and missions comes first. The Church has been entrusted with the gospel. With clear purpose and plan and the use of its resources of men and means it must carry this message to the unchurched all about it and in all lands. It is not enough to proclaim it to those who come within its walls.

(2) The Church has a moral witness to bear, not simply in relation to individual life but as regards the whole social life of man. Government, industry, race and class relations, the work of the state in education, international relations, problems of war and peace, all these enter in. It must proclaim a God of righteousness whose authority is over nations and industry as well as the individual. It must point out the will of this God and his way for the life of society: the way of justice and freedom; the way of reverence and regard for man as man transcending all differences of race and class and country; the spirit of good will and concern for others, both individuals and nations; the expression of this good will in unselfish and creative co-operation aiming at justice and peace and equal access to the goods of life.

(3) The Church must face the social evils of its day: the fact of war and the reliance upon force; the selfishness of a purely nationalist policy; the exaltation of the state above human freedom and welfare, making men property and vassals and tools of work and war; the conception of an economic order in which individual advantage is viewed as the dominant and sufficient motive. It must assert God's ultimate ownership of all the wealth of earth, and the obligation of men and nations to see their possessions of wealth and power as a trust from God in the service of man.

The Church must educate its people in these matters. It is not enough to have pronouncements from its leaders or from church

assemblies. It must help its people through its press, its pulpit, and its schools to know the evils that obtain, the progress that is made, the Christian principles which apply, the goals which a Christian society should seek, the ways that make for peace. That does not mean presenting political or economic programs or identifying itself with any particular system or party. But it does not exclude judgment in a concrete situation where the required course becomes clear for meeting a given evil or attaining a good which is plainly God's will. The fullest opportunity comes to the Church in democratic lands. Here it can train men in right ideals, make them see their citizen obligations, and inspire them to give service to society and the state. A democracy which exists simply as organization and constitution and laws is like a machine without power, a body without guiding intelligence and controlling spirit. The Church is not a superstate controlling governments, but the state needs the Christian Church alike to serve it and to hold before it God's way for its life, the way of freedom, justice, service, and peace.

(4) In the ethical field as in the religious field the first task of the Church is to be the Church: not an institution set to rule, nor concerned simply with ritual and doctrine, organization and promotion, but as the expression in its own life of God's purpose of a redeemed humanity. Church and kingdom of God are not the same, but the Church so far as it is Christ's Church will be manifestation and expression of the kingdom. Its life should be more eloquent than its word. The life should be that of a fellowship whose members are ruled by God's Spirit, a life which shows the meaning of faith and love and truth as incarnated in human society. In such a society good will and service will dominate instead of greed and self-concern; faith will give courage and strength; the pride and fear, the selfishness and hate, which divide men will give place to an active and creative brotherhood where all men are equal as children of God and where love rules their life. True, the empirical Church is far from this, but this is its goal, this is its true life, and in realizing that life it will render its greatest service to man.

The Church Divine and Human

The world with which religion has to do is marked everywhere by a certain duality. It is seen in man, who knows the pull of the earthly and evil as well as that hunger which God alone can still. We see it in the Scriptures which bring to us the Word of God and yet come in the words of men with the limitations of the human and historical. Man knows it in the double pull of the individual and the social and in his nature as free and yet bound. It appears in the world about us, the world that comes from God and is under his rule, yet is full of pain, discord, and evil of every kind. And this duality appears in the Church. We speak of the Church as one, holy, catholic, apostolic. But the Church that we see is divided, limited in vision, imperfect in life.

Various ways have been used in the attempt to meet this problem. For Roman Catholicism the Church is not a fellowship of imperfect saints but a holy institution, constituted by the hierarchy, to which God has committed truth, authority, and the means of salvation. In its official life and action this institution has direct divine guidance and control, so that it is holy, infallible, and indefectible.

In Protestantism recourse has frequently been had to the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church. The visible Church, it is said, is constituted by the human fellowship and the organized institution. The imperfections lie in this historical-empirical Church. It includes those who are not truly Christian, and there are true children of God outside its fold. The invisible Church is constituted by the true followers of Christ, and God alone can know these.

There is a truth which this distinction seeks to express, but it is better set forth in other terms. The New Testament knows nothing of an invisible Church. It knows only a visible Church, composed of the followers of Christ joined in actual fellowship. This is the Church which God is redeeming, in which his Spirit dwells, in which his children are joined in communion, the body of Christ carrying on his work, the Church of history. We shall better un-

derstand the problem of the dual nature of the Church if we consider it as divine and human.

The Church is divine because it came from God through Christ, not by a formal act of founding or a prescription of organization, but as the fruit of the fellowship which Christ established and as the instrument of his continuing work. It is divine because God's Spirit dwells in it and works through it. To it God has committed the gospel message. Through it he seeks to win men to himself. In it he nurtures his children and builds up a fellowship of faith and love. The Church is the continuing incarnation of God in human life.

The Church is human. To say this is not to rule out its divine character; it is simply to recognize *how* God gives himself and *how* he works. The Church in its life and work is part of God's total work of salvation. Salvation is not something inserted from above, separate from the human, whether conceived as infallible institution, irresistible grace, or in any other form of action that is not personal and ethical. Salvation is God's transforming presence in human life found wherever man responds to his word and will in the insight and obedience of faith. And this applies to the Church as the fellowship that itself is being saved and that is the instrument in God's saving work.

Thus the Church is human as well as divine. It is God coming into human life, man in saving fellowship with God. But it no more means perfection and infallibility than is the case in the individual who is being saved and used. The Church has a divine Lord and a divine message of salvation, but it has varied widely in interpretation and proclamation. There are no infallible creeds. Its leaders—popes, priests, ministers, scholars, saints—have none of them been infallible in teaching or impeccable in life. Dante, loyal churchman, found more than one pope in hell. In its various parts it has often been divisive, intolerant, given to persecution. Its members are not always easily distinguishable from the world about them. But it is a Church that is being saved and being used, as it has been through the centuries.

From this standpoint we interpret such words as one, holy,

catholic, apostolic, as applied to the Church. Here the duality of the Church is clearly illustrated, not a dualism in which we find somewhere a core of the absolute and perfect contrasted with a body that is human and imperfect, but a duality in which the divine dwells with the human and works in it. The Church is one so far as Christ really rules it—one in the gospel proclaimed, one in its faith and allegiance, one in the Spirit from which its life comes. Yet we recognize clearly the human limitations and defects here. The Church is divided. The oneness is something which in its fullness still awaits achievement.

The Church is holy, but here, too, in a limited sense. It is holy so far as it is truly dedicated to God (consecrated); it is holy so far as it has been transformed in life and made like to God by his Spirit (sanctified). The goal is plain; "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, . . . that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). The Church is being made holy. The Church that we know in history is not perfect and without blemish, but it belongs to the holy God and the Holy Spirit is its life.

The Church is catholic. Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Evangelical churches unite in the common confession: "I believe in the holy catholic Church." The word "catholic" means universal. The Christian Church is the one Church of all mankind. Where Christ is all and in all, there "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man" (Col. 3:11). We "are all one in Christ Jesus." Unfortunately the word "catholic" has been commonly linked to one church group and, indeed, claimed by that communion in exclusive manner. But the very denial that other communions are true churches, belonging to the body of Christ, reveals in itself a sectarian rather than a catholic spirit, a fact that is not altered by the size or antiquity of the Roman Church. Of late, using another term, derived like catholic from the Greek and meaning literally the whole inhabited world, we have come to speak of the Ecumenical Church. The ecumenical movement involves the conception of the one catholic Church, the desire to regain its unity in mutual un-

derstanding, in active co-operation, and, so far as possible, in visible and organic form.

As the words catholic and ecumenical call us to include the whole world in our thought of the Church, so the word apostolic calls us to see the one Church of history. It does not necessarily involve an identity in organization or an "apostolic succession" in clerical orders. It does point to the Church as one body, living through the ages, holding the faith and continuing the work that began with the apostles.

But we have not adequately characterized the Church when we say one, holy, catholic, apostolic. The decisive word remains: it is the Church of Christ. He is the ground of our unity, today and through the ages. We are a Christian Church only as we remain in living relation with him: as we worship the one God and Father of us all revealed to us in the Son, as we proclaim the one gospel of salvation through the mercy of God brought to us in Christ the Redeemer, as we find in him the will of God for our lives and acknowledge him as Lord. No continuity with the past, no world outreach in fellowship, can take the place of this living and continuing relation with the God whom we know in Christ.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SALVATION IN HISTORY: THE MEANING

SALVATION IS THE WORK OF GOD IN OVERCOMING EVIL AND GIVING LIFE TO MAN. THIS LIFE HAS DIFFERENT ASPECTS. There is an individual life which each man lives with God and in a world of his own. There is a social or associated life, a life lived with others in manifold relations. There is a historical life, significant for the individual as well as for society. There is a life that is eternal, beginning here in time, transcending time and death.

These aspects, however, belong together; they form a whole. It is one life with which we are dealing. No aspect of that life can be achieved separately. There is no salvation for society except as men are brought individually into saving relation with God. There is no salvation which is purely individual; always it involves life in fellowship and a fellowship which roots in history. And the life beyond must first be a life within, an eternal life that begins here and now, just as the kingdom of God in heaven is the consummation of God's work in history here on earth.

The Meaning of Historical-Social Salvation

Historical-social salvation is perhaps a better term than salvation in history. Social and historical are inseparable aspects of one movement, and each depends upon the other for its full meaning. The words call for closer definition and first the word social. All being is being in relation; there is no pure atomism. The story of evolu-

[1] See Jan Smuts, *Holism and Evolution.*

tion is that of a process of relating and whole-making.[1] The process increases in significance with each rise in the level of being. Thus for all animate beings it involves a relation to the past in heredity (the biological), to environment (the ecological—the particular *oikos*, or "home"), and to the group of its own kind (the social). With man this social life reaches its highest meaning and possibilities. It is a society of rational beings, sharing ideas and ideals, with common interests and activities of manifold nature, economic, political, scientific, aesthetic, intellectual, religious. It varies in scope from the intimate and limited ties of home and friendship to the more general bonds of community, nation, and now increasingly of world relations.

Is this associated life a possible subject of redemption? Can we speak of social salvation? Not a few deny this. Modern premillennialism declares that the total life of man is to be redeemed but that this is not in the purpose of God for this age; the Church is simply to preach the gospel to individuals and to point to a hope in the future. There are those who are deeply concerned with social problems and who believe in the possibility of a transformation of society, but who envisage only human action in social reform and do not see a saving action of God in society. The neo-orthodox group raises its voice in protest against the latter, emphasizing the sinfulness and impotence of man. Many of this group, like Barth and Brunner, demand that Christians face social evils and work against them. But this is not social salvation. Society, we are told, is abstract and impersonal; salvation is individual and personal. The concern with social justice and human welfare belongs to ethics, not to salvation. These matters are "irrelevant to man's attitude toward God" and not the real theme of the New Testament. The theme of the gospel is individual salvation; society cannot know forgiveness of sins, cannot be in Christ.[2]

The objection to the idea of social salvation hinges in part upon the conception of salvation, in part upon the view of the method and scope of God's saving work. It is right that salvation be clear-

[2] Emil Brunner, "A Great Time for the Preacher," *The Christian Century*, July 11, 1951, pp. 816-18.

ly differentiated from ethics. The former is God's work for man and in man; the latter concerns man's responsibility and effort. But it is wrong to separate the two. Man's moral life, individual and social, needs God's grace and help. It is wrong to speak of a social "gospel" when all that is meant is social reform through human effort. We must learn to see God's saving work in all the life of man, social as well as individual.

We note first the error of thinking that only individual life is personal. It is true there are large elements of the impersonal in man's associated life, especially in the complex, institutionalized society of today. In its collective nature and in the control from above, a large measure of which obtains even in "free enterprise" lands, the social life tends to lose its personal and responsible character. But this is not the whole picture and not the ideal. The associated life can be personal. The personal is present when men say "we," wherever reflection, moral ideals, free action, and the sense of responsibility enter in. Obviously these are present in the life of the home and the Church. They belong to any true democracy as well.

But where there is a personal-ethical life like this, there the Christian faith sees the need and the possibility of saving help. God comes to this life with a demand for righteousness, love, truth, and the acknowledgment of his rule. He calls for confession of common sin and for repentance. But here, as always, demand and gift go together. God offers to men and nations his forgiveness and his help. That is salvation. The prophets saw this in their message to the nation. Christianity purified and deepened the Old Testament concept of salvation, but it did not abrogate this aspect.

Today as never before the Church is challenged to make plain her message of salvation in this field. Various causes enter in to make this crucial. The swift advance of science, industry, trade, communication, and travel has brought a rapid growth of man's associated life. There has been an unparalleled development of institutional life and control, not simply in the state but in the economic world and in other spheres. The development of democratic thought and life has brought a deepening conviction of the worth

and rights of the individual, while the technical-institutional development has threatened to submerge the individual and to make the personal secondary. In all this the mind of man has wavered between confidence in his prowess and despair in the face of forces which he seems unable to control. In neither case have the masses of men turned to religion, to the God of individual help or the Power working for man in this turmoil that we call history. Once more the challenge comes to the faithful: "Where is now your God?"

The Christian Church has come for such a time as this. It has a witness to bear which includes not only God's saving help for the single soul and within the Christian fellowship, but the gracious purpose and saving power of God in history.

Philosophies of History

A review of the different conceptions of history may well precede our study of the Christian position. They fall into a few main groups.

We may note first the views which deny meaning to history. Agreeing at this point, they differ radically from each other. There is the view of Platonic idealism for which the only real world is that of ideas and ideals, a world that is eternal and unchanging. The world of sense and time and change has here no value or validity, and history no real significance. In sharp contrast is the modern materialistic-mechanistic view or that of a simple undogmatic naturalism, but there is agreement in the denial of meaning to history. This view knows only time and ceaseless change in a visible world. We can, indeed, discern a certain order or law, but the world, alike of nature and of man (who is just one element in nature), shows no meaning in its endless change, no purpose or directing power.

There is a pessimistic view of history. It recognizes the world of human happenings as real and significant and as joined together in a certain pattern, but it denies to it any positive value and finds no place for hope. Man is evil. History moves inevitably downward. The cause may be sought in some initial fall of the race—

Hesiod held that as well as the writer of Gen. 3. The pessimism may apply only to this age, as with apocalypticism, or it may declare itself to be simply realistic, asserting that man is naturally selfish, that he is dominated by the animal side of his nature, a creature in whom the "ape and tiger" will not die. Essentially pessimistic is also the so-called cyclical theory of history. Here history is simply the story of the rise and fall of civilizations, following the same pattern, an endlessly recurring cycle of events such as we see in nature, a movement which shows no basic meaning and offers no ultimate hope.

In marked contrast is the humanistic-idealistic-optimistic view. It may rest upon a theory of inevitable progress (a pseudo-evolutionary philosophy) or upon a belief in the innate goodness of human nature which suffers simply from wrong social conditions. In general this type of thought sees man as his own savior. There is no higher power for him to call upon, and he needs none. The way seems clear. It is that of increasing knowledge, mastery of nature, mastery of self, freedom joined to the sense of human solidarity and the need of co-operation, reverence for human personality, concern for justice, the spirit of good will. The logic of events, especially in the past half century, seems to refute this optimism; yet men still work on, fight on, refusing to accept fatalism or pessimism.

Here may be cited also the two great social philosophies which oppose each other today, Communism as found in Russia and Western democracy. Though primarily political-social movements, there is implicit in each a world view and a philosophy of history. Both are avowedly concerned with the welfare of man, of all men, irrespective of race or class. Both would set men free from domination and exploitation, the former viewing this as economic, the latter as first of all political. But the differences in basic viewpoint are radical.

In theory Communism is an apocalyptic view of history, deriving from its founder, the German Jew, Karl Marx. The world is evil but not hopeless. Deliverance will come, not by gradual change and peaceful means, but by revolution achieved through

force. The interim will be a time of conflict, of power vested in a special group or an all-dominating state. But the new era, thus brought in, will be one of peace, of a classless society, where state and external control will pass away, where all dictatorship will cease, even of the proletariat.

Within this apocalyptic framework there are radical differences from Jewish apocalypticism. There is no God here; only man's might at arms will bring deliverance. There is no recognition of moral-spiritual authority, no place for religious faith. Religion is an "opiate," stilling the needed movement of revolt. There is no authority but self-interest; justice, truth, good will, reverence for man as man—these have no word to say. The goods sought for are material. This philosophy of history rests firmly on a secularistic, materialistic, militaristic world view. There is little if any sign of concern with a future society which shall differ radically from the present Soviet regime. In that regime we must seek the real philosophy. Its marks are plain: a materialism that has no room for the ethical or spiritual; a militarism that knows no power but force; no concern for truth, for real education and intelligent co-operation; propagandism but no free access to the truth or call to understand; a fascist state ruled by the few with no place for freedom; a totalitarian state that would dominate every aspect of life.

Democracy is the other social movement which calls for study if we are to understand the modern world to which the Church must bring its message. We consider democracy here as a movement. The grasp of its ideals and their achievement in practice are in process, and the process will be long for it means a reshaping of age-old institutions and practices. Our concern here is with its implicit principles. These are in sharp contrast with Communism. Like Communism its avowed concern is with man, without regard to race or status. But it sees man as more than an economic being with only material needs, though recognizing the importance of these. It demands reverence for man as moral personal being, with a right to freedom of thought and worship as well as political freedom. It joins social obligation to individual rights. It sees an author-

ity which is above majorities and above rulers, the authority of truth and justice and good will.

There is a democratic faith: faith in man, in the way of freedom for social advance, and in the ultimate power of ideal forces—truth and justice and good will as against physical force, even though the latter may be provisionally needed. In this confident hope for the future, this belief in spiritual forces as against physical force, in the way of truth and freedom, in this fellowship of justice and freedom which includes social obligation with individual rights, there is implied a philosophy of history as well as a moral faith. There is no direct assertion of a particular religious faith; religious freedom is assured to all. And yet the reality of a higher world of values and authority is clearly involved, and the great leaders of democracy have again and again voiced their faith in God as part of their faith in the democratic way. It is clear, logically and historically, that democracy owes these basic ideas and ideals to Christianity.

Israel's Philosophy of History

The first real philosophy of history appeared in Israel. Its source was in the conception of God. God is creator and ruler; therefore the world of matter and time and change belongs to him. God is *personal* spirit; he is not abstract idea or ideal. He is the God of action, the living God; transcending the world in holiness and power, he yet works in it, alike in nature and in history. He is ethical being, dealing with men in righteousness and mercy, working for the good of men. He is the God of purpose, a purpose that appears in action and that gives meaning to history and hope to men of faith. The whole conception is dynamic, not static; and the world of events belongs to it and takes meaning from it.

Here was the background and basis for a philosophy of history: from this standpoint Israel sought to understand her own problem as a nation. What is the purpose of God? When and how will he bring his goal to pass? Why is there evil and suffering, and why the long delay? Who will share in this coming good? We note

here how philosophy of history and doctrine of redemption go together. For Israel salvation was historical.

In its earliest form this hope of salvation was national-political. God had chosen this people for his own. He had delivered them and given them their home. Israel suffered now from the nations about her, but there was to be a day of judgment upon her foes, "the day of the Lord." Then she would be established in power and prosperity and peace.

The teaching of the prophets transcended this view. Their doctrine of salvation was still historical; they hoped for God's redeeming action in history and for the salvation of Israel. But they had a new and higher vision of God and that led them to the larger view alike of the goal of God's saving work and of its way. The advance came not through any one prophet nor all at once, but it moved clearly toward this higher goal and gave to Christianity a great religious heritage.

First came the truer realization of the character of Jehovah; indeed it all flowed from this. Jehovah is righteous and merciful; his concern is not the glory and might of a people but that righteousness of life and the knowledge of God may obtain in the earth. Hence the demand for righteousness and the judgment on iniquity belong to Israel as well as to the nations. Indeed, to Israel first of all and that because of her special favors (Amos 3:2; 9:7-10). The transformed nationalism of the prophets expresses itself positively, notably in the Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah. Israel is privileged in order that she may be, not the master, but the servant of the nations. There is the movement toward universalism, rooting again in the vision of God. His righteousness which makes its demand on Israel as upon other peoples, his mercy which takes in all nations, these lead to Amos' vision of a God who is redemptively present in the history of Ethiopians and Philistines and Syrians as truly as in that of Israel (Isa. 19:19-25).

To the emphasis on the ethical and universal there was added in Jeremiah's great message an insight into the spiritual goal and the spiritual way of God's redemption. Israel's restoration and God's coming rule would be marked by a new relation between Jehovah

and his people. The old covenant was one of laws, with Jehovah as ruler and Israel called to obedience. The new covenant would be that of a redeeming God who would write his law in the hearts of his people (Jer. 24:7; 31:31-34; 32:38-40). So Israel's life and that of the nations would be transformed; peace would succeed war, justice take the place of oppression. And in harmony with the new humanity nature herself and the very beasts of the field were to be made over (Mic. 4:1-4; Isa. 11:1-9). The inner rule of the spirit was to become the inclusive rule. So, at its highest, there came in Israel the vision of a salvation in history which included individual and social, inner and outer, nature as well as man. This conception of God and his salvation was background and basis for the Christian message.

Jewish Apocalypticism

Jewish apocalypticism requires consideration here because of its place in the thought setting of primitive Christianity and its recurring appearance in the later Church. It was a child of prophetism but with marked differences. Strictly speaking it had no philosophy of history; history was a meaningless interlude between creation and the final redemption. There was no salvation in history; the new age was to come after God had put an end to history. The present age was under the domination of evil spiritual powers, Satan and his angels. It was not only evil but was growing worse. God, transcendent, omnipotent, inscrutable, had determined in advance the plan of the ages: the character of this age, how long it should last, when the new age was to come. That age would come with a judgment of destruction upon the forces of evil; it would bring the triumph of Israel, the people of God.

The underlying philosophy has certain clear marks: a strict divine transcendence as against the idea of a living God present and at work in history; a God who mediates his word by angels instead of speaking to his servants; the stress on divine omnipotence working its ends by irresistible power rather than in historical process or by ethical-spiritual means; a divine determinism marking out in advance the course of events; a dualism, not metaphysical

and ultimate, but with a kingdom of evil spirits in control of this age and opposed to the kingdom of God and his people which waits for the age to come. More incidental yet not unconnected with the basic viewpoint are features which mark the form of these apocalyptic writings: the pseudonymity which seeks support by use of the names of great figures of the past, the appeal to visions and ecstatic experiences, and the use of mythological figures and events.

One must not overlook the practical aim of apocalyptic and the truths which it asserted. These writings have rightly been called "tracts for bad times." In dark and trying days they sought to give courage to the saints, to maintain faith in the God of might and goodness, and hope for final victory. They faced the fact of evil and its power but did not despair. They saw this evil not as merely individual and subjective but as entrenched might in this world. And in their scheme of the ages they expressed, however inadequately, the truth that history is no even flow of events, no steady movement upward and onward; that there is struggle and constant conflict, that there are epochs and crises.

It is easy to overemphasize the apocalyptic element in the New Testament. Its presence is witnessed by the little apocalypses of the Synoptics, the Pauline passages in which Paul speaks of the Lord's return and the final consummation, and the book of Revelation. The Synoptic passages are probably not the words of Jesus, but it is clear that he expected the early end of this age and establishment of the kingdom of God. And this was the common hope of the early Church.

The thoroughgoing apocalyptic conception of history is found today in the premillennialism of certain church groups, especially in America. Following a strict verbal inspiration theory, finding in the Bible a revealed and predetermined program of the course of events, it seeks to incorporate in its doctrine all the biblical sayings as to the future, making special use of Daniel and Revelation. So it holds to two kingdoms. The first is the thousand-year reign of Christ upon earth, initiated by armed conflict, with the forces of evil subdued but not destroyed and the saints put in the seats of

rule—an essentially political-militarist conception. At the close of this kingdom on earth there comes the final conflict and judgment with a general resurrection, the saints of earlier ages having been raised at the beginning of the millennium; and this brings in the eternal kingdom above.

This is the familiar apocalyptic philosophy: a predetermined course of events, history without any constructive meaning, a God who brings in his kingdom by direct action and irresistible force instead of moral-spiritual means such as the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Spirit.

What was new in Christianity and its points of difference from apocalyptic are much more significant than the points of contact, and they give the distinctive Christian philosophy of history. There was the faith that God in Christ had come to this world for its salvation. The consummation, indeed, lay in the future; but the saving work was here and now going on in men made new, in the Church as the body of Christ and the people of God, in the gift of the Spirit. God was at work in the Church and in the world. The new age had already dawned. The kingdom of God was "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," and this kingdom was here in their midst and within them. The powers of the new age were already at work. Hence the gospel which they preached was more and more concerned with the new life which was offered to them here and now. And it was the experience of this life in all its power and wealth and promise which enabled the Church to meet the challenge to their faith which came with the delayed return of Christ. Our knowledge of that postapostolic period is scanty, but there seems to have been no serious crisis here, as is suggested by the fact that the New Testament has only a single passing reference to this matter (2 Pet. 3:4).[8]

[8] On the general subject of this chapter see H. F. Rall, *Modern Premillennialism and the Christian Hope.*

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SALVATION IN HISTORY: THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

OUR DOCTRINE OF SALVATION RESTS UPON OUR FAITH IN THE GOD WHO HAS COME TO US IN CHRIST AND OUR KNOWLEDGE of what this God has done and is doing for men. This holds true also of our doctrine of salvation in history. It is not a speculative theory, nor does it rest on the view that we have in the Bible a supernaturally revealed program of future events. It roots in our vision of God: the power of his Spirit of truth and love and his gracious purpose revealed in Christ, which includes individual and social, time and the eternal, the world of today and the movement of history.

(1) He is the transcendent God. We deal not simply with time and change, with the finite and human. We have a God whose power and purpose transcend these. (2) He is the living God, the God of action. He is not simply the creator who stands at the beginning, nor the God of judgment waiting at the end. He is in history, present with his purpose, his direction, his ongoing judgment, his transforming power. (3) He is the God who works with men, calling men not simply to belief and obedience but to a fellowship which is at once receptive and active, in which he gives them his Spirit and in which they share in his work.

Against the background of this faith we consider now the main questions which arise in connection with the understanding of salvation in history. (1) What is the goal of God in history? (2) What is the way of God for reaching this goal? (3) What may

we hope for as regards its attainment? The meaning of the kingdom of God, the place of the Church as means and as goal, the relation of individual and social, of divine action and social order, of divine deed and human agency, all these enter in.

The Goal of God

God's goal in history has been conceived in two main forms, that of the kingdom of God and that of a people of God. Both are figures of speech taken from human life and need study as to their meaning and value.

1. The kingdom of God is the term most commonly used to express God's goal and the Christian hope, whether conceived as lying beyond history or as including human history as well. Its meaning is best given by the phrase "the *kingship* of God"; its primary meaning is rule rather than realm. The phrase itself is not used in the Old Testament, but the idea is basic. Israel's faith was in the God who was Lord of all; her hope was that his rule would be established on earth. She saw her own salvation in the overthrow of evil and the coming of that rule.

There is a certain paradox in this idea of God's rule as that which is and that which is to come. It rests upon the fact of the twofold nature of that rule. There is, first, the rule of the creator and governor, the God who makes and sustains and governs all things. All things have their being in him, and nothing, not even the forces of evil, exists apart from him or can escape that order within which all things move. This is his universal and necessary rule. But there is another rule of God, an inner and ethical rule, the sway of righteousness and love and truth. It is God's rule in the faith and life of man.

This rule of God is personal. It rests upon an I and Thou relation, upon God's personal approach and man's personal response. It is a free relation, and yet it involves the authority and rule of God. Indeed, only here does his complete authority obtain; for here the whole life is opened to him and his sway is over inmost thought and desire as well as outward conduct. Here earthly analogies fail. True, men sometimes wield power over others

by inner and spiritual influence; but there always remains the "salt unplumbed estranging sea" which separates each isle of self from all others. Yet the free self is not destroyed when God thus enters in. Rather it comes to true attainment.

While this rule is inner and personal, it is not merely subjective or individual. It includes the social and historical. That was the primary emphasis, indeed, in Old Testament thought. It was not removed with the deepening spiritual conception of the New Testament. God's rule concerns the total life of man, and that life, for good or ill, is necessarily social. Whether we think of the evil to be overcome or of the good to be achieved, this redemption of man's associated life belonged to God's goal. State, industry, international relations, education, art, recreation, as well as the association of men in the worship and service of God, all belong here.

This inclusive view was that of the prophets. They envisaged the just rule of princes, peace among the nations, Israel as the servant of other peoples, even a transformation of the physical world in which desert and drought and famine should give way to fruitful abundance. Our need is to see that this goal of God belongs to the present age, not merely to a coming millennium, and to ask as to the Church's message and the responsibility of Christian men.

As we consider the way of God as revealed in Christ and the good life which God would give to man, we must ask what these mean for the world of today and our present social order. This is not an attempt to outline a program of social change but simply to see the life of today and the obligation of man in the light of the goal of God. What does it mean to affirm the coming of God's rule over all life and his purpose to bring the good life to all? We may illustrate this by reference to two fields of crucial importance, and first to the state.

For man's achievement of the true and full life he needs certain conditions: security, so that he may live and work in peace; freedom to think, to worship, to have access to the truth, to shape the order under which he is to live and to which he gives obedience; justice in the administering of that order. This is the way in which

a Christian should view the task of the state. Here the state is seen as servant of men under God. Its goal is not its own glory and power but the good of men; the test of the state is the well-being of its people. Its task is more than conserving order; it is creative service. It is concerned therefore with education, preparing youth to live, with conditions which make for health of body and spirit, with the opportunity to work. This does not mean paternalism or totalitarianism, for freedom is a primary good. It does mean that the state will give support in all those human concerns where individual effort alone is not adequate.

Of increasing importance for this conception of the kingdom of God is the relation of the state to other states. The ideals and practices of international life have been dominantly pagan: the will of each nation as its own supreme law, its own welfare as its supreme if not its sole concern, power and material well-being as its goal, force as its final reliance. Where the relation to other peoples has not been that of indifference and isolation, it has very commonly been a type of imperialism—economic, political, or by direct domination. Association through treaty has usually meant a calculation of profit from give and take and a setting of the profit of one group against that of the rest. Today the century-old movement of science, technology, and the economic life has compelled even the most materially minded of men to see how impossible the old way of national selfishness and strife has become.

As we seek to understand God's kingdom in the light of the spirit of Christ, what would his rule require in the relations of nations to each other? Our question is not one of means of attainment or forms of organization, but rather of the goal. That may be suggested briefly: a sense of solidarity, of the welfare which can come to one only as it comes to all; the way of co-operation in working together for this common good; a regard for peoples of all races and nations as being equally children of the one God; a spirit of good will and service; a sense of stewardship, with each nation recognizing its possessions and power as a trust committed to it by the God to whom all belongs; an acknowledgment of the authority

of God as above all powers and authorities of earth, the God of love and righteousness.

2. The second form in which God's goal in history has been conceived is that of a people of God. So it was in Israel. "I . . . will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12). So in the New Testament God is seen as creating for himself a people, the true Israel which he is gathering from all nations. The Church is a family, the household of faith, the household of God (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10).

But this idea of a people of God is much more than the survival of an older concept; it roots in the total Christian faith. God's supreme relation to man is that of father. Our fellow men are for us children of God and our brothers. Together we form the family of God. That ideal demands new men, men who have become true children of God in the spirit of his Son. But it demands fellowship, too: only in a *communio sanctorum*, in the family of God, can we learn to become children of God; only so can we live the full life of children. The goal of God is a new humanity, new in the spirit of true sonship, new in all the relations which make up life.

3. What is the place of the Church in this goal of God? Historically the Church presents two aspects, that of an institution and that of a fellowship. In neither aspect can we equate the Church with the kingdom of God; in both the Church is essential in God's goal and to his working.

The Church stands for the highest expression of fellowship. Here we see men united in that which counts most in life: in faith, worship, apprehension of the truth, common service of others, and mutual help in the spirit of love. So far as the Church is truly the Church of God's purpose, it is the highest realization of his goal of a people of God. Yet we must recognize that God has children outside of the visible, historical fellowship. Similarly, when we think of the kingdom of God, having in mind his moral-spiritual rule, however imperfect it may be, that rule is present wherever we find in individuals and in society the presence and power of faith and truth, of love and righteousness. Obviously, that takes us beyond the Church.

Kingdom of God, people of God, and Church are not rival concepts. They are all efforts to express the same great end: new men in a new world. They refer to the same creative-redemptive purpose of God: to overcome evil, to bring men into the fellowship of his own life, to create for himself a humanity in which this life of truth and love and righteousness shall be realized.

The Way of God

The ways of God will never be fully known to man. We know in part. We walk by faith and not by sight. We face the mystery of evil. We are finite creatures seeking to understand the Infinite and the way of his working. Yet we do know, though it be only in part. Ours is a self-revealing God. In Jesus Christ, in his life and death, in his word and work, we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:6). We not only know what God is in his power and holiness and love, but we know something of the way of his working. Faith for the Christian means always trust and obedience. But trust is no blind submission; it is our answer when God reveals what he is. And obedience is no mere formal response to commands or laws, nor some single act of surrender; it is walking with God in oneness of spirit and life.

All this means that we need to know alike the goal of God and the way of his working if we are to serve him, and that applies to God's work in bringing his kingdom upon earth. God's way of working points the way for man's living. That does not mean a separate body of truth miraculously communicated. It is not a program of future events given in apocalyptic vision. Human life is one. God is one, and his goal for man is ever the same: life in its fullness through a fellowship of faith and love. His way of working is the same whether he deals with individual or group, with the life of the day or the slow movement of history. Hence our discussion will have a close relation to the question of individual salvation as already considered. At the same time there will appear the differences which arise when we deal with the group life of man and the ongoing movement of history.

1. God works in man and with man and through man. The kingdom is God's gift; our hope for a new world rests in God. But the nature of this goal determines the way of its coming. The kingdom of God is personal-ethical-spiritual; it is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Such a kingdom cannot come by compulsive power. With social-historical life as with individual life God enters only as man responds; God works as men open to him their mind and will that he may work in them and through them. True, "every virtue we possess, and every victory won" is of God. There is here no place for self-sufficiency or pride. At every step and in every task "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). The ethics of Christianity is religious. But equally the religion of Christians is ethical; it is that of children, not slaves, of workers together with God, not cogs in a machine driven by dominating force. We are saved by faith, not by works, by the faith which opens the door to God's saving help. But the surrender is no passive act or one-time deed; it is a conscious, purposive, active, intelligent giving of self day by day, that the will of God and the work of God may be done in us and through us. And all this applies to the social-historical life equally with the individual.

We cannot, therefore, separate God's way of working from the way that men should take. That will appear at almost every point in the discussion which follows, and first of all when we speak of God's way of love.

2. God's way is that of free, self-giving, creative love—agape. God's love is good will; he desires the highest good of all his creatures. It is merciful and forgiving. It is creative, not by a single act but in continuously seeking to bring forth for men all those goods which go to make up man's life. It is self-giving; God enters into man's life, giving himself in fellowship to all who will receive him. It is more than omnipresence or world-sustaining power; he gives his own life and dwells in men as personal presence. He becomes in man the spirit of truth, righteousness, love, and peace.

This is the meaning of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which signifies at once the presence of God and the gift of life.

And this way of God becomes the way for men, not only for the intimate personal relations of home and friendship but for all man's associated life. Men ask whether the way of love is not an impossible ideal. Has not the whole movement in the evolution of life on earth been one of self-assertion, the struggle for survival and for individual advance in competition with others? And is not that the dominant motive today in all social spheres, economic, political, international? Yes, that motive not only largely controls individual and social life today but finds its defenders in the economic and international spheres. Nevertheless, our whole social situation today proclaims that without the spirit of good will the human race cannot survive. Today the challenge is clearer than ever: love or perish. Further, looking back one can see that this spirit has actually been at work. The rule of selfishness, the greed for goods and power, the reliance upon force, these have indeed been a power. But regard for others, the spirit of good will, the willingness to work with others and for others, these too have been present, binding men together, making possible home and community, and lifting life to higher levels. Without these, indeed, the race would long since have perished. There is no Christian life, no salvation, except as this spirit obtains. The presence of this spirit is the work of God. Social salvation is the carrying of this spirit, by God's grace, into the whole associated life of man.

3. God's way is that of truth. If religion means a person-to-person relation—man and God, man and man—then truth must enter in. That does not mean information supernaturally given, the mere disclosure of doctrine and demand. It means the God who is truth speaking to the creature man whom he has made to know the truth. It concerns understanding, a grasp of meaning. The misuse of reason is tragic, whether it comes from faulty understanding or evil purpose. The disparagement of reason is folly. God's Spirit is the Spirit of truth as well as of love and righteous-

ness, and it calls for reason in man. In our social life selfishness and folly go together. Sin makes men blind. It enslaves them in prejudice, narrowness, false ideals and goals, ignorance of the way of life and of the source of help. God uses the truth for deliverance: "the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). "The truth" in the Christian sense means first of all God's revelation of himself, the truth in which all other truths are grounded. It means the ideals that should rule us, the ways that lead to life and peace. So the prophet, the preacher, the teacher, have a central place in Christianity. Jesus ended his earthly work on the cross. But that work began with his teaching, and the cross itself is not only reconciling love but a light that shows the heart of God and the way of life for man.

Over against the entrenched wrongs of our social life truth seems like a feeble weapon. But truth is God's instrument; with it he calls men to faith, challenges the sins of society as of individuals, shows man his true nature and need, and points men to the enduring goods of life and the way of their attainment. Here belong, as instruments needed for this work, home and Church and school, the printed page and all the modern ways of bringing the spoken word and the pictured scene to the multitude. Their dedication to God's service seems a long way off, yet they are being used today. The immediate need is for the Church to awaken more fully to its obligation and opportunity in bringing men the truth. The Church has neglected its teaching task: to train a people that will understand the faith, to make clear its ideals and its demands upon the social life as well as the individual, to declare faithfully the sins of nations, of our economic life, of race pride and injustice, to set forth the sovereign God of all life. Conversely, our educational systems must cease to concern themselves so exclusively with mere knowledge and skills and give so little heed to the truth that counts for life, to matters of ideals and character and faith. The difficulties are obvious, alike as to agency and method. We have not yet found the way for the adequate functioning of religion in education. But if our society is to be saved, then we must find a way to bring to our youth the

truth that goes beyond the scholarly, the scientific, and the technical.

4. God's way for society is a way of order and judgment; this is his own way of action, and this is required of society. Commonly men think of such an order and its enforcement as something impersonal, external, and negative. True, there is a restraining power in the order alike of the moral universe and of nature. That order sets limits to the forces of evil and makes evil self-destructive. We see its judgments in history, sometimes in dramatic form as in the fate of certain dictators and warmakers in recent history. But it may come slowly as in the sure decay of nations where people clamor for rights and shirk duty, where injustice is tolerated, world obligations evaded and the nation exalted above God, or where men make gods of wealth and power.

But the primary meaning of the principle of order as the way of God is not negative but positive and constructive. The goal of God is free men; with nations as with individuals righteousness and truth and peace must first live in men's hearts and minds and wills and be the free expression of the inner spirit. But the need of God's order remains. That order is a finger pointing the way of life. It is a summons to obedience, not in order to make men slaves but to set them free. It is the sure support of all right endeavor. The dependable world is the expression of a dependable God, with whom is "no variation, or shadow due to change" (Jas. 1:17). Such order belongs to human society. In a world of ignorance, imperfection, and immaturity there is need of a control that is external —even more so in relation to willful evil. But even in the present imperfect world our man-made orders, economic and political, so far as they accord with God's ways, work positively as an aid in securing the justice and welfare and peace which express God's rule. We say with Dante: "In his will is our peace." Indeed, all the goods of life, health, material welfare, freedom, truth, joy, enriching fellowship, come when men know God's will and make it their way.

5. There is a free action of God in history. He works through

human instruments, but he is always more than these. There are a purpose and wisdom and power which transcend our finite humanity. He is the God who works, the living God. He is not the less free because his action is not arbitrary but flows from his character and purpose. These determine his world order, but they do not exclude that freedom of the living God which is everywhere witnessed in the Scriptures. Faith finds in history more than an impersonal order, established once for all, moving on of itself to a goal of salvation or judgment. Time is more than "an ever-flowing stream" which "bears all its sons away." There is more in history than incessant, unmeaning change. It shows neither inevitable progress nor inescapable deterioration. It is the scene of meaningful action, that of God as well as man.

As such it brings periods of crisis, times when action is peculiarly decisive. Here is the meaning of the distinction, emphasized in recent writings in this field, between the two Greek words for time, *chronos* and *kairos*. The primary meaning of *kairos* is measure, so it comes to mean a given time and, more especially, the right time. It is time with a meaning, a decisive time, a crisis. The thought appears again and again in the New Testament. We read of "times or seasons [*chronos, kairos*] which the Father has fixed" (Acts 1:7). "You know what hour it is," writes Paul; ". . . the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:11, 12). One may recognize the error of the early Church in thinking that the new age was just ready to be ushered in by Christ's visible return, and the mistake of the apocalyptists in outlining the detailed program of God's action; but the basic truth remains of crucial periods and decisive events in redemptive history. The coming of Christ was the supreme deed, the central event, the beginning of a new age.

We see Christ's coming to earth as the supreme event in God's action, as the central *kairos* in our history. God sent his Son "when the time had fully come" (Gal. 4:4). We see this as we consider the preparation in Israel, the new unity of rule and of speech

brought by Greece and Rome, the free intercourse which these secured, and not least the deep needs of men.[1]

But there have been other crucial periods, seasons of God's special action, fateful times for the movement of redemption in history; and we may well ask if we are not in such a period today. We see a situation that has been in the making for a century or more: the advance of science and technology with the growth of wealth and power; a spirit of revolt, of revolution, which has come with the new sense of human worth and dignity and the right to self-rule and a fitting share in the goods of life—the latter as a new and notable fact in the life of the awakening millions of the Orient. We see men and nations brought together in ever closer union but without knowing how to live together—the strife of classes and races and peoples, present in times of "peace" and coming to terrible expression in world war. At the same time we see a new vision coming to the Church and to not a few leaders of the nations. The Church is seeing the meaning of the gospel for life in these larger relations. It is hearing a call to a common witness and a united effort. The nations are struggling with the problem, not only of ending war, but of working with each other and for underprivileged peoples. Faith sees God's action in such a crisis: evil made clear by its consequences, the challenge to follow a new way, the gospel seen in new and larger meaning, the compulsion to decision, the fateful consequences of such decisions for good or ill. Here we see the significance of *kairos* as a distinctive time event, *das Einmalige*, time not as endless succession but as meaningful moment, when God speaks in action, when man makes a decision (*krisis*), "and the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light." [2]

6. The individual and the group both have their place in God's way of working. Basic for Christian faith is God's concern with the individual, alike as object of his love and as instrument for his purpose. It is not institution or doctrine or rite which comes first;

[1] For a popular statement see T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, ch. IX.
[2] Lowell, "The Present Crisis."

it is God speaking to man, man making answer to God. God's use of the individual is recognized by us all. That is the meaning of the roll call of the heroes of faith in Heb. 11. The significance of the individual remains today despite the growth of associated life and action. The final test of social organization and action is found in the kind of individual life which it brings forth. The basic need of every social organization is individuals who will bring understanding and devotion. Without this it becomes institutionalized and depersonalized, defeating its very end. Prophetic religion has similarly recognized the place of individual leaders, those who hear God's word for their day, who proclaim it to the people, who lead the people in the service of God.

The common error is to suppose that individual and social are in necessary opposition. Undoubtedly they may become such in thought and practice, as in the extremes which we witness today in social theory. There is the individualism which fails to see that historically speaking there is no really human life apart from the group. Only in fellowship can man be truly man. The real danger here appears more in practice than in theory, the practice which makes self-interest the rule of action for individuals or group or nation. With this moral defect there goes the failure to see the solidarity of human life, the need of co-operation and of mutual service in the spirit of good will. The other extreme is equally false and even more dangerous. It is the exaltation of the institution and of social control, with the individual or the human mass viewed as possession and tool and with that absolute control of all life which we call totalitarianism, the clearest modern examples of which are fascism and communism.

The way out of this false opposition is the Christian conception of man as personal, made for an individual life of truth and faith and freedom, but made equally for fellowship in love and service. Here is the being who can be man only as he finds God and makes him supreme, above state and all else, and only as he finds his brother man and the fellowship without which he cannot become

a person or live the personal life. Our task here is to see the way God uses the group life in his work of human salvation.

The forms of human association are as varied as the interests and activities of life. The home, the Church, the state, and economic association are the most important of these, including in the state all forms of political organization from the smallest local unit to the United Nations. The Christian must regard each of these as sphere and intended instrument of God's working as he seeks the good of mankind.

The function of the Church has already been considered. It is God's chosen agent for proclaiming his gospel, mediating his grace, and ministering to man's needs, especially in worship. It is at the same time called of God to set forth in its own life the meaning of the kingdom of God. It is not itself the kingdom of God; it should be its highest exemplification. All Christian thought recognizes the home as instrument in God's work of making men and establishing his rule. What is needed today is to combat the forces which militate against the home, to realize the temptation of parents to shift their task to Church and school and commercialized entertainment, to summon the home to a new appreciation of its divine calling.

The state and the economic order demand a special word. Many regard the state as a strictly secular institution, to be carefully divorced from religion, dwelling strongly here in America on the separation of Church and state. The extension of its functions, moving so rapidly today, is viewed with deep concern, including not only totalitarianism but the development of the "welfare state" in the Western democracies. With this goes the insistence that religion should be viewed as "spiritual" and as an individual concern. Needless to say, the totalitarian states, fascist and communist, are even more opposed to the idea of religion, or the Church having any relevance to matters political and economic, or the right to set any authority above the sovereign state.

It is of first importance that Christian thinking should be clear

here, not simply as to the demand of God in a given social situation, but as to the purpose and way of God. God is concerned with the highest good and the total good of man. He offers us no blueprint for the social order, nor can the Church, speaking in his name, offer such. But the Church clearly has a duty that bears directly on the social order and the ruling powers.

First, it must set forth the purpose and will of God: an order of society which stands for justice, truth, peace, equal and full opportunity for all men as being alike children of God's love, good will between nations and groups, and the readiness to work with others and to serve. And it must seek to make plain what this demands in given situations, summoning the people to understanding and support when the nation takes these ways.

Second, it must point out where the state or the economic order fails in these ends. Such failures are obvious to the Christian conscience, and the Church of the last generation or two has made marked progress in discernment and in witness. We may note a few: war and the reliance upon force; a self-centered nationalism; the worship of the state; the denial of freedom to men; discrimination on racial or religious grounds; an economic order which puts wealth and control of means of production into the hands of the few and leaves great numbers to poverty, unemployment, or economic uncertainty. The Church must be free and courageous in such declarations, resisting the devices of smear and slander, of appeal to prejudice and passion, as directed against all criticism.

Third, it is not the task of the Church to propose economic and political systems or to identify itself with any one of these, knowing that the purpose of God will always transcend every human program or achievement. It may well, however, recognize that some movements and institutions stand far closer than others to Christian principles, that others are radically opposed in principle. It need not approve every action of the United Nations Assembly, but it may see that its basic principles and aims are in accord with God's will. It must judge the specific plans and actual work of de-

mocracy and yet may recognize its avowed ideals of regard for man as man, of justice, freedom, equal opportunity, and concern for human welfare to be in accord with the Christian way.

It remains to point out again that home, Church, state, the economic order, and all other forms of rightful human association are not simply subject to the Ruler God but are called to be instruments of the Savior God in his good purpose for man. Clearly there are higher and lower levels of good in their service, but it is wrong to think that while preaching the gospel serves God's redemptive work, the world of politics and economics is a merely secular world, or at most one that comes under God's rule but cannot serve his saving purpose. We see this clearly on the negative side. A self-centered, militaristic, totalitarian state lowers the whole moral-spiritual life of a people. We observe backward peoples where sheer poverty and misery are the seedbed of revolution and war, where despair opens the door to ambitious leaders and false plans. On the positive side it is clear what an economic order can mean which combines social co-operation and individual responsibility, which brings to all opportunity for work, just compensation, access to those natural resources which are God's alone in absolute ownership and which belong to individuals and states only in trust for the good of all. Inseparable from this is that ideal order of the state whose meaning and goal we are slowly apprehending. Such an order means the realization for mankind of God-intended goods, material and spiritual. It affords conditions under which Church and home may more freely achieve their true life and serve God's purpose.

The subjects considered above have usually been treated under social ethics. Some would dispute their relevancy to a doctrine of salvation. The divorce of the two in this field is most clearly apparent among neo-orthodox thinkers, some of whom are deeply interested in the application of Christian principles to our social problems while finding no movement of God's redemptive action in this social-historical sphere. Ethically this is an advance on the traditional apocalyptic attitude, but in relation to the doctrine of salvation it continues the apocalyptic tradition with its pessimism

as regards the present age. What we need is to assert the Christian unity of ethics and salvation: no salvation which does not bring man's moral response and action; no ground for social hope except as we know that there is the saving work of God. Here, as in individual experience, we should hear Paul's word: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

WHAT MAY WE HOPE FOR?

JESUS CAME PREACHING THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS AT HAND. THIS WAS THE "GOOD NEWS." HE TAUGHT MEN TO pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth." God's kingdom means the rule of faith and love, of righteousness and peace in the hearts of men and in all the world's life. Today, nineteen centuries later, we see a world of evil. What may we hope for here on earth?

The Kingdom of God on Earth

The conceptions of the kingdom already considered give varying answers to this question. (1) The kingdom of God is the Church, and we may expect its increasing triumph—this the high church, and especially the Roman, view. (2) The kingdom of God is to be found in the saints who are saved and kept, and in the heaven which is our real hope—this the traditional Protestant view. (3) Apocalypticism in its current premillennial form posits two ages for this earth. For the present age there is no hope; it is Satan's age, and the world can only grow worse. The next age, the millennium, will come with Christ's return and will know no evil. This is viewed as imminent—and has been since Christ's death. (4) Christian social idealists, while including the personal-spiritual, see the kingdom of God as involving a gradually achieved higher social order. While not omitting divine action, the stress is on human action and responsibility. (5) Current neo-orthodoxy has no positive word on the hope of a coming kingdom of God on earth. It em-

phasizes the moral obligation of Christian social interest and action, but it has no word on God's redemptive presence and action in the social order and holds out no hope for a coming rule of love and righteousness on earth. Man is evil, the world is evil, and there is no other prospect for history.

Our first need is to face realistically the fact of evil. Here neo-orthodoxy has rendered a real service as against an easy optimism. It is not a question of the doctrine of original sin and total depravity, but the reality and power of evil must be faced. We see this evil in the individual: selfishness, greed, hate, fear, the divided spirit. It is even plainer in social life and social institutions. We see the selfishness of national life, the systematic and calculated selfishness of labor, industrial, and financial groups. Removed ever further from the individual, the associated life tends to become ever more impersonal and less accessible to ideals. The whole modern movement has been toward larger groupings–political, industrial, national, international. That in turn has meant increasing concentration of power, and power corrupts, tending to become selfish, irresponsible, arbitrary.

The effects of the scientific-technological advance must also be noted. Good results are obvious: the overcoming of ancient evils of disease and poverty, the furnishing of instruments of communication which make it possible for men better to understand each other and better to work tgoether, as well as furthering human knowledge. But we must face accompanying evils also. These instruments which bring the world together at the same time serve to multiply divisions, to promote strife, and to make war incomparably more destructive. Further, the multiplication of material wealth and of means of personal gratification has helped to increase materialism of thought and selfishness of life.

But this does not mean the loss of hope of a redeemed world or the limitation of our hope to a realm in heaven. The ground of our hope is God. He is the transcendent God, the God of holiness and might, infinitely above the human and finite. He is more than the

sum of human goodness and finite forces. It is well to stress this against all naturalism and humanism and mere programs of reform. But it is just as necessary to know that this transcendent God is the living God, the God who works, the God who dwells with men in love and saving help. We can pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," only because we have first prayed, "Our Father who art in heaven." Our hope is not in man, and it is not measured by signs of progress. Our hope is not in a divine force which shall sometime "smash" the evil and place the saints in seats of power. It is in the power of redeeming love: in love that is mightier than selfishness, in truth that will win out over error, in righteousness which abides when oppression and injustice destroy themselves.

All about us are the evidences of the work of this God. Men are being won for Christ and are being transformed into his spirit. The Church of these last generations has been marked by aggressive missionary enterprise, by a new sense of its task of education, by a new appreciation of the meaning of the gospel for the social life, by a deeper desire for unity. Significant is the spread of democracy. Men have been slow in grasping its full meaning and slower still in conforming their practice to its ideals, especially in industry and international relations. But they are seeing more clearly its demand and its needs. The ideals of freedom and responsibility, of social justice and regard for man as man, the realization of human solidarity and of the need of co-operation for a common good, these are marks of the work in our world of a higher Power than man.

But all this should make clear to us how long and hard the road is for the coming of God's rule. Our hope is in God, but our problem, and God's problem, is man with his ignorance and sin. The kingdom is God's gift, but its coming waits for men who will see it, receive it, and embody its rule in their own life and in all the associations of life. We can only say then: God's rule is here where his will is done; God's rule is coming as men receive Christ

and live his life. The rest we must leave with God; it is not ours to know of times and seasons.

One other word must follow from all this: The kingdom of God will never be fully attained in this world. Perfection does not belong to the world of the finite-human. Each individual must deal afresh with impulse and passion and the temptation to self-centeredness and self-indulgence. Always man may say "no" to God. Always he will need to grow to maturity. And so with social groups. The Church must constantly be renewed. Justice must always be reaffirmed; freedom must always be won anew. "Never leave growing till the life to come." Society as well as the individual must

> Watch, and fight, and pray;
> The battle ne'er give o'er.

The Christian hope is not utopianism.

The Life to Come

For many the doctrine of the future life seems to be a kind of addendum to the great Christian doctrines of God and man and salvation, whose chief concern is the proof of man's survival after death. On the contrary it must be said that our belief in the life to come is an integral part of our Christian faith, that it flows directly from our faith in God and from the Christian view of man and salvation, and that it is far more than the mere idea of survival. Here again we must face the need for theology to see things whole and to see all in the light of the knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

1. The idea of some kind of existence after death has been almost universal, but the conception of that existence has varied greatly. In its beginnings it was the center of all manner of superstitions and fears. Man could not believe that his spirit died. But the existence after death seemed a hapless one, whether the spirit was conceived as descending into a world of darkness or as wandering about the earth. Death meant leaving the world of light and life and warm fellowship. Men could not think of extinction, but what

survived, they thought, was only the ghost of a man, a shade, a pale and ineffectual thing. The Achilles of Homer expressed this primitive attitude: "Speak not consolingly of death to me, O great Odysseus; sooner would I be the slave of another in the house of a penniless wight, who had no great livelihood, than king of all the dead." The Hebrew idea of Sheol (wrongly translated hell in our older versions) corresponded to the dark underworld which the Greeks called Hades. In their thought of the future men used such terms as the grave, the pit, the place of darkness, the land of forgetfulness, where men no longer praised Jehovah.[1]

The belief in a meaningful and desirable life after death came slowly; its beginnings, however, go back long before the Christian era. We find it in Egypt and Persia, in Greece with Plato, and in the Orphic teachings. It was part of the movement of human thought away from the visible and external to the rational, ethical, and spiritual as part of the real world. The ethical note appeared in the idea of judgment, of the future life as determined by the kind of life lived here.

Most significant is the movement in Hebrew thought and its preparation for the Christian faith in immortality. The prophetic concern was primarily with God and the nation. The individual and inner aspects of religion, however, followed inevitably from the personal-ethical concept of God and from the deepening of the religious life. Such a God demanded of men not simply ritual performance and the keeping of laws but an inner spirit of humility and mercy and righteousness. Such a God was concerned not merely with nations, but with individuals (Ps. 23). Would he leave in the grave these children of his love? Would men thus joined to God be separated from him by death (Ps. 16:8-10)? The thought of God's righteousness entered in: this God who would vindicate Israel before the nations, would he not vindicate his saints? Would the same Sheol wait equally for the good and the evil? This is the movement of thought, the growing insight of

[1] See Isa. 38:10-19; Ps. 88:10-12; and the dramatic picture in Isa. 14 of the descent of the oppressor king of Babylon to this hopeless abode.

faith which we find suggested by some passages in the later psalms, in Dan. 12:2, 3, and in Isa. 26:19. It issued at last in a definite faith in the future life, whether in a renewed earth or in a heavenly realm.

What is important to note is the fact that we have here a faith, a religious belief. The primitive idea of survival was not religious; it was simply a part of an animistic world view. With the Jews the belief in immortality was not a development of the old animism nor a conclusion from philosophical argument; it rested upon their faith in God and in religion as life with God.

2. We need now to consider the grounds for this faith. For Christianity immortality is not a doctrine separately given and independently proved. It is a part of our total faith and stands or falls with this. First is our faith in God. That, indeed, is the final and sufficient ground. The arguments against immortality commonly rest upon a materialistic or naturalistic world view which rules out immortality as it rules out God. The Christian faith holds that the ultimate reality is spiritual. It affirms not only a God, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the creative good will of this God man has his definite place.

The Christian idea of man enters in with that of God as the ground of hope. It is not the nature of man as rational being nor any claim resting upon the worth of man in himself that grounds our hope, however; it is God's undeserved love and his gracious purpose in relation to man. That purpose began with the creation of man in his likeness as a being who could know God and worship him and share his Spirit. Its goal was a redeemed humanity, redeemed not only for this world but for the world above. God in his infinite and undeserved love, man as seen in the light of God and of God's gracious purpose, these are the ground of our belief in immortality. It is faith in this God that gives life meaning here and reveals a meaning which transcends time. In God's salvation we have eternal life here in time and a life that time cannot destroy. And both are given to him who, taught of God, can look up and

say, "Our Father." Without this, life has neither meaning for this world nor hope for a world beyond.

Various rational arguments have been advanced for the belief in immortality. Ancient is the idea of the soul as an indivisible and indestructible spiritual atom, or unit, or as imperishable spiritual essence. But while man must have the capacity for this in natural endowment, a rational, ethical, personal life is an achievement, not something given him ready-made. Nor can we use the analogy of the conservation of energy; it is the life of a personal being with which we are here concerned, not an impersonal force.

More significant is the appeal to the evidences of order, rationality, and purpose in the universe, to a continuing creative process which brings forth higher levels of being, with the conclusion that our universe would be totally irrational if the highest product of this age-long movement should be doomed to destruction. That this world is rational, at least in some degree, is the common assumption of human thought and action. The farmer, the engineer, the scientist, all proceed on the conviction of a dependable order in nature, that is, a rational element. But there is a lower rationality and a higher. The lower is causal; the higher is telic, implying thought, purpose, and values. This argument has its strongest form in a definitely theistic view and most clearly in Christian theism.

We would seem to be driven then to the choice between a world that is rational in this higher sense and a world that is basically irrational and unmeaning. The higher rationality of the Christian view presents a God who is not only power and inclusive order but gracious purpose as well. His goal is not merely ordered being, but beauty and truth and goodness. The highest embodiment of these is in rational, ethical, personal beings like men, living together in a fellowship of faith and love and righteousness. There may be other worlds with other conscious beings, but we cannot conceive of God's end as being less than this. To these ends God has worked through ages of cosmic development, through millenniums of human history on this earth. It would surely be an irrational world if

these results, achieved at such cost of time and toil and pain, were in the end "cast as rubbish to the void."

The spiritualistic argument need not detain us. It makes the claim to prove man's conscious personal survival of death through sensible and indubitable communications from the departed. Even if the dubious evidence were accepted, the conclusion would be of little more value than the primitive animistic beliefs. Our concern is not with mere persistence but with life, life that has quality and meaning. What is the life of these disembodied spirits who hover about their old haunts and can only furnish trivial communications? Is it a life with God? Does it offer rich and satisfying fellowship? Is it life immortal or simply the temporary persistence of a shadowy spirit which finally fades out? The words of Thomas à Kempis belong here: "Where thou art, there is heaven; and where thou art not, there is death and hell."

3. The objections to the idea of immortality for the most part root in a naturalistic world view, though in some cases coming from a misapprehension of the Christian doctrine.

"How can we think of a spirit existing apart from a body?" we are asked. This life of the "spirit" has developed, we are told, in and through the body. Thinking depends upon the brain, perception of the world upon our sense organs. In illness or injury of the body we see the spirit life directly affected. The individual, like the race, is a product of the world of nature and has no life apart from this. The one reality is the unceasing movement of natural forces. Human life is but one of a myriad of products in the ceaseless succession of life and death. Even when a philosophy of naturalism is not avowed, the most common cause of doubt is the unspoken assumption that the visible world is the one certain reality and so the life in the body the only life of which we can be sure.

We answer: The real question at issue here is not that of immortality but rather that of our underlying world view. What is ultimate in the universe, matter or spirit? The Christian affirms that it is spirit, a personal Spirit, creative Good Will bringing forth the order and beauty of nature, the ascending forms of life here

on earth, and this creature man who can realize in his life God's highest gifts of truth and freedom and moral character. The way which this creator Spirit follows we learn by studying nature and history. It is the way of slow growth in the individual as in cosmic evolution. But the method is one thing; the ultimate cause is another. Naturalism is reductive; it levels down the result (beauty, truth, goodness, the world of moral personality) so that it may keep the ultimate cause down to the level of impersonal nature. Theism sees a cause which is adequate to the result: a Being who is personal-ethical Spirit. The physical in our world is thus the "adjective" of the spiritual; the substance is the spiritual.[2]

But if the spiritual is ultimate and not the physical, then the survival of the spiritual ceases to be an insuperable problem, even though we may not find it easy to picture with our experience limited to this body-mind state of existence. Using the physical as its instrument, the finite spiritual becomes increasingly its master and in a measure increasingly independent. This side is commonly overlooked. Physically man begins to go backward, literally to die, with his thirties; the moral and rational life may grow steadily to the last years, reaching often its highest level when the body is weak and broken. Why then should we not say that when at last the structure of life is completed, the physical like a scaffolding should be taken away? When we view it from above, why should not the finite spirits survive for the creator Spirit? Is it not irrational to suppose that what is achieved at such cost should at the end be cast aside? So we come again to the basic question: What is the final reality of this universe, matter and time and ceaseless unmeaning change, or reason and love and righteousness having their being in a personal and purposive God?

Objections have been sometimes raised from the ethical standpoint. Does not this belief make for an otherworldliness which turns man from his real tasks? Why not "one world at a time"? Yes, our first task is to live here and now, doing the work that

[2] See W. P. Montague, *The Chances of Surviving Death*, pp. 13 ff.

God has given us to do. But there is a right and needed otherworldliness. If man is to live rightly in this world, he needs a faith in a higher world. That higher world is at once a present reality and a hope for the future. For right Christian thinking the latter enforces the former; the two are one. The invisible and eternal world does not rob this world of value. Rather it gives to it meaning and worth, as it gives men strength for the life in time. It was those who "looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God," who through this faith "conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, . . . won strength out of weakness" (Heb. 11:10, 33-34).

In further objection it is asserted that the claim to immortality is egoistic, the interest in individual immortality selfish. Why should these feeble creatures, dwellers on this little planet, think that they out of all creation should merit this gift of everlasting life? Whatever some may think, this is certainly not the Christian attitude or conception. The interest in immortality usually has its rise not in self-concern but first in the thought of loved ones. Again, when we think of others, it seems impossible that the nobler spirits of our race and all they have achieved should disappear in a moment through the incident of physical death. The deeper reason, however, brings us back again to God. It is not the worth of man that is ground for this belief but faith in God's infinite love as revealed in Christ, faith that God cares for us as his children, faith that the divine mercy which gives us life eternal here on earth will keep us in the world to come.

Two substitutes have been offered for individual immortality. The older one is mystical or metaphysical. Individual existence is limited if not evil. Its goal is reabsorption into the divine, the World Soul or the Infinite.[3] The other substitute is social. Accepting death as final for the individual, it holds before men as a higher

[3] For a modern expression of this view see Ernst Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre*, p. 382. "The ultimate goal of life after death, however, cannot be eternal, that is, absolute endlessness of existence, a never ceasing being with God. It can only be the final return into the being of God of the purified and sanctified finite creature."

goal than individual existence the immortality of influence in the generations to come.

What is needed here is a truer conception of the significance of the individual-personal. It is in the concrete, the individual, that God's creativity is to be seen, not in any uniformity of process or in undifferentiated being.[4] The personal represents the highest level of creation as we know it. The personal life, it is true, is achieved only in the social and handed down in the group heritage, socially and not merely biologically. But there is no group life apart from individuals. There is no vision or faith, no love or righteousness, except as achieved in individual life; and in the end all this achievement will perish except as individuals survive. The creation of values demands the individual and social; their conservation requires the same. Either we have the conservation of individuals who have attained these values or we face the ultimate destruction of all the higher values thus achieved and history ends in a meaningless void.

4. How shall we think of the life beyond? The essential elements of the Christian hope stem directly from that knowledge of God and life which has come to us through Jesus Christ.

It is not a matter of place or external surroundings. A common mistake has been the literalizing of the picture language in which men voiced their hopes, especially in such apocalyptic writing as the book of Revelation. Here again is the misconception of revelation as communication of information, particularly with reference to a program of the future. The restraint of the Gospels and in the main of Paul is in notable contrast, and is expressive of that Christian attitude of faith which, having God, leaves all else with God. Another error has been the tendency to overstress the negative, to see heaven primarily in terms of what is absent: toil, pain, death. The issue of this emphasis tends to be a kind of glorified eudaemonism, the reward of a comfortable, carefree, happy existence in return for the trials of earthly life.

[4] See A. N. Whitehead's development of the principle of concretion in *Religion in the Making* and *Science and the Modern World;* Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Immortality,* p. 157; B. H. Streeter, *Reality,* ch. X.

This does not mean that we are to discard all pictures when we speak of the world to come, else we should have to be silent. We have only the language of human experience to speak of the more than human, only pictures and analogies taken from earth when we would speak of heaven. Gates of pearl, streets of gold, a four-square city, these are simply meant to convey a picture of perfection. Only as taken literally does the imagery of Revelation pervert rather than express the Christian faith. So we shall continue to sing:

> Jerusalem the golden,
> With milk and honey blest!

The Christian attitude, however, is better expressed by Whittier's lines:

> I know not what the future hath
> Of marvel or surprise,
> Assured alone that life and death
> His mercy underlies.

But while we have no supernatural revelation of the externals of the world beyond, there is a knowledge of its life through what is given to us here in faith and experience. Our knowledge is partial as our life is partial, but we do have a knowledge of God, and we do have a life from God and with God, eternal life here in time. And this enables us to know some things about the life beyond.

Life with God, life in the presence of God, life fulfilled, that is the meaning of heaven. We know that life here; it will not be less in the world beyond, however much more it may be. (1) It will be a conscious personal life, not some absorption into a divine being. God is love, truth, righteousness. We can share that life only as we are persons, conscious, rational, and free. (2) It will not be merely individual life. The life will be expressed and fulfilled in fellowship, fellowship with God, fellowship with others. Heaven is not an assemblage of individuals; it is the family of God. In

that fellowship there will be common worship, mutual love and service, a sharing with others by which we become richer. (3) Heaven means rest and peace, but not inactivity. Eternal life is more than mere continued existence. We have life only as we live it. (4) And that means continuing growth. Man is finite, limited; God's love and truth are infinite. Heaven will mean the confirmation of "all we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good," as Browning's *Abt Vogler* says, when "eternity affirms the conception of an hour." But heaven will mean opportunity as well, richer and fuller, without the hindrances of earth. There will be nothing higher than the love of God or the light of his presence, but we may grow in that love and move on and upward in that light.

In this setting we see the meaning of the idea of "bodily" resurrection. Nowhere is it more necessary than here to realize that our knowledge is limited and that we must think in symbols. The Jewish-Christian conception of the life to come was first of all a protest, not so much against extinction as against the idea of a shadowy, meaningless, "lifeless" existence of disembodied spirits. It envisaged the full life of the whole man. That meant for them, as it does for us, the idea of a "body." Man is a spirit, but it is in and through a body that we know our world, have fellowship with others, and are able to work and learn and grow.

With this basic conviction we agree, but when we say "resurrection of the body," we are using a symbol to express this faith. In its first form the Apostles' Creed spoke of *resurrectio carnis*. Men thought that the actual physical body would be lifted up to heaven. So some speak today of a miraculous bringing together in the resurrection of the particles of bodies burned or decayed and scattered abroad. Paul gives us better guidance. He speaks like a Hebrew of the body being raised, but he insists that this body is different from that which was buried. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). What is "sown" is a physical body; what is "raised" is a spiritual body. As with the planted seed God gives a body as he has chosen. What we affirm is that we shall have in the life to come an instrument which will serve us there as the physical body does on earth, an instrument for

seeing and knowing, for self-expression and for fellowship with like beings.

5. No problems are more difficult for Christian thought in its doctrine of the future than those connected with final judgment and the fate of the evil. Modern theology has given little attention to these matters. The attitude of the common man is not hard to understand. In part it is due to a sentimentalism which passes over moral issues, in part to a reaction against the older emphasis on future punishment which was part of the traditional evangelistic appeal, and the confident way in which men were assigned to heaven and hell.[5]

We have noted that the belief in immortality first came to clear expression in late Judaism and early Christianity. The idea of judgment, penalty, and award was much older. It was a clear implication of the belief in a righteous God and a moral universe. But here, as in regard to salvation, its concern was with the nation, not the individual. Later thought was concerned with the individual as well, alike with sinner and saint. The primary aim of the apocalyptists was to sustain the faith of the harassed saints, to strengthen their loyalty and perseverance by showing them, not only that the tragic conflict would end in victory, but that the faithful who suffered here would live in joy hereafter.

The obverse of this hope was the thought of judgment on the wicked and their punishment in hell. Orthodox theology, Roman Catholic and Protestant, took this over, literalizing the physical aspects of the picture given in these writings. Stress was laid on physical suffering, on torments inflicted by God, the torture of a never-ending fire, with "limbs crackling . . . and yet unburnt." And some saw the bliss of the saints enhanced because "a perfect view" was "granted them of the tortures of the damned." [6]

In the reaction from this there has been danger of losing es-

[5] Jonathan Edwards and Charles H. Spurgeon are examples from among notable leaders of an earlier day. This type of evangelistic appeal still obtains in certain groups.

[6] Thomas Aquinas, quoted by Dean Inge in the symposium *What Is Hell?*, p. 9.

sential elements of the Christian faith and hope, and first in our thought of God. The righteousness of God is merciful; it seeks the victory of right in a forgiveness which overcomes sinfulness and is morally creative. But the mercy of God is righteous. What hope would there be for our race if we did not believe that the face of God is set against evil, opposing it, bringing it under judgment, looking to an end in which the finally unrepentant evil are shut out from the fellowship of those who love? This is our hope of a coming kingdom of God, on earth and in heaven.

Further, there are certain clear and important truths which we must face as we look at the human side. They are essentials of a world of moral order. (1) Vision and freedom and responsibility belong to man. They set him apart. In them lie alike the glory of life and the possibility of tragedy. Man has the vision of the highest; he determines his destiny as he chooses or refuses. The glory is not possible for him without the fateful possibility. "I have set before you life and death . . . ; therefore choose life" (Deut. 30:19). (2) Man becomes what he chooses and with increasing fixity of character. Nothing in the world is so plastic as human nature; no creature has such a range of potentiality. But, for good or ill, the many possibilities become at last, in character, one specific reality. (3) There is a law of gravitation and separation. In this life it is conditioned and limited by various forces. Good and evil dwell together in a given community. But within the community there are communions, fellowships in which men are drawn together by common spirit and interests. Heaven and hell will bring this movement to its conclusion. There by inevitable moral gravitation each will go to his own place. This is hell, that evil desire shall be fulfilled in evil character and that men of evil shall find themselves with those of like kind.

Turning away from pictures which represent only externals, we can gain some understanding of what hell may be from this view of God and this insight into life. What makes hell? Not physical torture inflicted by a God of vengeance, not the external condi-

tions of a given place. Here, apparently, are some of the elements involved: continued conscious existence with remembrance of the good which one has refused; separation from that God who is light and life and peace; the fact that we must inescapably live with ourselves, that our world is the evil world of self which we have made. In Milton's words, "Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell." Sin is selfishness. The consequence of sin is not only that man is shut up with himself but that he is shut out, by his own choice, from others. This, too, is hell, just as high and enriching fellowship makes heaven. Thus hell means death, just as faith and love mean life as they join us to God and our brothers. And this hell has a tragic existence here on earth.

In these simple elements of the Christian faith as to the future we have the background for the preaching of the gospel: the fact of sin, the proclamation of the God of mercy, the summons to repentance and faith, saving help for this world, the hope of the life beyond, the warning as to the consequences of sin, here and hereafter, and the solemn fact of judgment. These are the essentials which have entered into Christian preaching from the beginning.

But there are other questions which inevitably arise. Is man's eternal destiny settled irrevocably at the moment of death? Is that equally true of all? What of the multitudes who have never heard the gospel, who have never been faced with the clear summons to accept or reject? It may be said that each will be judged according to the light which he had, but is it not the will of our God that each man shall have the fullest help in his life decision, the help of the clear word of the gospel and, not less, of a supporting Christian environment? And what of those who die in infancy? Can we accept the Roman position that the baptized are saved, the unbaptized are lost? Or shall we declare with Calvin that with infants as with adults those shall be saved whom God has elected for that end, the rest being predetermined for damnation?

There are questions, too, concerning those whom we think of as saved. We picture heaven as the place of pure love and righteousness. But what is the actual nature of the "saints" whom we know

here on earth? How often we see in them immaturity and imperfection, the mingling of good and evil, of love and selfishness. Are we not all just saints in the making who daily need to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses"?

The Roman Catholic Church has sought to meet this problem by its doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory is not a place for sinners destined for hell but "for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions." It serves a double purpose: that of punishment (required even after the sin itself has been pardoned) and of needed purification.[7] Against this Roman view we must reject in the former the aspect of legalism, in the latter the idea that evil is some sort of substance which can be eliminated or destroyed by direct action. Some Protestants have held that at death, or at the general resurrection, God fits the soul for heaven by an act of instantaneous and entire sanctification. But here again is the failure to see that moral-spiritual results can never be accomplished by sheer power but only by moral-spiritual means.

What shall we say then in answer to these insistent questions? Our first and greatest need is to recognize the limitations of our knowledge and, whether we be thinking of heaven or of hell, to leave the future of men to the God who is at once wise and merciful and just. There are, of course, central truths of our faith which we need to proclaim: the solemn responsibility of life, the consequences for character and destiny which follow from our life decisions, the increase in fixity of character, an ultimate separation of good and evil. But with these goes our faith in the God revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

We believe in the God who does not wish that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). He will continue to seek to turn men to himself. He will never turn from those who seek him in sincere repentance. It is possible that men with little chance to know the truth, or with unformed character, may in some other world see more clearly and seek for life. And as re-

[7] *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* "Purgatory," XII, 575.

gards imperfect and immature saints, instead of a preparation through the fires of purgatory, or some magical act of transformation at the moment of death, we may think of the world beyond as one in which life will mean increasing vision and growth in love. This is, clearly, the kind of world to which those will go who die in infancy, a world with the richest opportunity for endless attainment of life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The aim of this bibliography is to suggest helpful and representative works in each field. It includes books of different viewpoints. It is assumed that the student will use such general works of reference as the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* and biblical encyclopedias, as well as general works on systematic theology such as those of W. A. Brown, Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, W. N. Clarke, *Foundations* by Seven Oxford Men, Charles Hodge, A. C. Knudson, H. C. Sheldon, A. H. Strong, and Wilhelm and Scannell (Roman Catholic). My own position is further stated in my *Christianity, According to Paul,* and *Modern Premillennialism.*

The list of more general works in this field is followed by classified lists arranged in the general order of the chapters of this work.

General Works

Aulén, Gustaf. *The Faith of the Christian Church.* Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948.

Brunner, Emil. *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952.

Hocking, W. E. *Human Nature and Its Remaking.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1929.

Knudson, A. C. *The Doctrine of Redemption.* New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1933.

Mackintosh, H. R. *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1927.

Micklem, Nathaniel. *The Doctrine of Our Redemption.* New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948.

Moberly, R. C. *Atonement and Personality.* New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.

Nygren, Anders. *The Gospel of God.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951.

Richards, G. W. *Christian Ways of Salvation.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1923.

Robinson, H. W. *Redemption and Revelation in the Actuality of History*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1942.

Stevens, G. B. *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.

Taylor, Vincent. *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1946.

The report of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Evanston, 1954), dealing with the general theme of the Christian hope, should be of great interest and value.

Man and Sin

Barbour, C. E. *Sin and the New Psychology*. New York· Abingdon Press, 1930.

Brunner, Emil. *Man in Revolt*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947.

Dewey, John. *Human Nature and Conduct*. New York: Modern Library, Inc., 1930.

Jessup, T. E., et al. *The Christian Understanding of Man* (an Oxford Conference Book). Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938.

Machen, J. G. *The Christian View of Man*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947.

Mackay, W. M. *The Disease and Remedy of Sin*. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1919.

Moxon, R. S. *The Doctrine of Sin*. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1922.

Müller, Julius. *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Orr, James. *Sin as a Problem of Today*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1910.

Robinson, H. W. *The Christian Doctrine of Man*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Temple, William. *Nature, Man and God*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1934.

Tennant, F. R. *The Concept of Sin*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1912.

———. *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*. New York: Macmillan Co.

Thomson, J. A., and Geddes, Patrick. *Evolution*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1911.

Christ and Salvation

Aulén, Gustaf. *Christus Victor*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1931.

Baillie, D. M. *God Was in Christ*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948.

Brunner, Emil. *The Mediator.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947.
Denney, James. *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation.* New York: George H. Doran Co., 1918.
Franks, R. S. *History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ.* 2 vols. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., 1918.
Hodgson, Leonard. *The Doctrine of the Atonement.* New York: George H. Doran Co., 1918.
Lewis, Edwin. *Jesus Christ and the Human Quest.* New York: Abingdon Press, 1924.
Rall, H. F. *According to Paul.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944.
Rashdall, Hastings. *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1920.
Raven, C. E. *Jesus and the Gospel of Love.* New York: Henry Holt & Co., Inc., 1931.

Man's Remaking; Ways of Help

Buttrick, G. A. *Prayer.* New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942.
Flew, R. N. *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1944.
Fosdick, H. E. *The Meaning of Prayer.* New York: Association Press, 1915.
Heiler, Friedrich. *Prayer.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1932.
Nock, A. D. *Conversion.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1933.
Oman, John. *Grace and Personality.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1925.
Paterson, W. P. *Conversion.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.
Paterson, W. P., and Russell, David. *The Power of Prayer.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1920.
Sangster, W. E. *The Path to Perfection.* New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943.
Streeter, B. H., ed. *Concerning Prayer.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1934.
Underwood, A. C. *Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1925.

The Church and Sacraments

Brown, W. A. *The Church, Catholic and Protestant.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935.
Flew, R. N., ed. *The Nature of the Church.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1952.

Forsyth, P. T. *The Church and the Sacraments.* Chicago: Blessing Book Stores, Inc., 1947.

Kerr, H. T. *The Christian Sacraments.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1944.

Quick, O. C. *The Christian Sacraments.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1927.

The Work of the Spirit

Rees, Thomas. *The Holy Spirit in Thought and Experience.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.

Robinson, H. W. *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1928.

Scott, E. F. *The Spirit in the New Testament.* New York: Doubleday & Co., 1923.

Streeter, B. H., ed. *The Spirit.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1935.

Salvation, Social and in History

Bennett, J. C. *Social Salvation.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935.

Brunner, Emil. *Christianity and Civilization.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948.

Wood, H. G., et al. *The Kingdom of God and History* (an Oxford Conference Book). Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1938.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Faith and History.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.

———. *Moral Man and Immoral Society.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933.

Rall, H. F. *The Coming Kingdom.* New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1924.

———. *Modern Premillennialism and the Christian Hope.* New York: Abingdon Press, 1920.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. *A Theology for the Social Gospel.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1917.

Scott, E. F. *The Kingdom and the Messiah.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Tillich, Paul. *The Interpretation of History.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

The Life Beyond

Baillie, John. *And the Life Everlasting.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933.

Brown, W. A. *The Christian Hope*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.

Charles, R. H. *Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism and in Christianity*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1913.

———. *The Doctrine of a Future Life*. London: A & C Black, Ltd., 1913.

Inge, W. R., et al. *What Is Hell?* New York: Harper & Bros., 1930.

Leckie, J. H. *The World to Come*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Mackintosh, H. R. *Immortality and the Future*.

Montague, W. P. *The Chances of Surviving Death*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1934.

Pringle-Pattison, A. S. *The Idea of Immortality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1922.

Simpson, J. Y. *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1922.

INDEX OF NAMES

INDEX OF SUBJECTS